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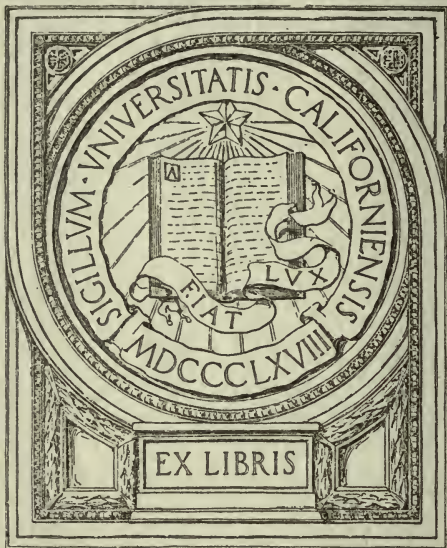


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GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LABOR  
BUREAU OF LABOR  
CARMELO HONORE, Chief

**SPECIAL BULLETIN**  
OF THE  
**BUREAU OF LABOR**  
ON  
**STRIKES IN PORTO RICO**  
DURING  
**FISCAL YEAR 1917-1918**  
AND  
**APPENDIX OF LABOR LAWS**  
APPROVED  
FROM 1916 TO MARCH, 1918

\*\*\*\*\*

June 1, 1918

SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO  
BUREAU OF SUPPLIES, PRINTING AND TRANSPORTATION  
1918



GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LABOR  
P. R. BUREAU OF LABOR  
" CARMELO HONORÉ, Chief

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TO MR. ALBONIA

ND 5344

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## OFFICIALS OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR.

CARMELO HONORÉ -----Chief.  
RAMÓN LEBRÓN <sup>1</sup> -----Assistant Chief.  
J. FIGUEROA DISDIER -----Chief Clerk and Statistician.  
JACINTO FONT TORRES <sup>2</sup> -----Stenographer.  
LUIS BARRERA -----Inspector.  
V. RAMOS RODRÍGUEZ -----Inspector.  
SALOMÓN ROSARIO -----Inspector.  
R. RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ <sup>3</sup> -----Inspector.  
LUIS F. MACHICOTE <sup>4</sup> -----Inspector.  
JUAN MORALES DÍAZ <sup>5</sup> -----Clerk.  
RAFAEL FERNÁNDEZ <sup>6</sup> -----Messenger.

---

<sup>1</sup> Appointed on September 26, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Appointed on January 10, 1918, to fill the position held by Mr. José Julio Morales, who was transferred to the Public Service Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Appointed Clerk on July 5, 1917, and promoted to the position of Inspector on March 20, 1918, to substitute Mr. Juan B. Soto Latorre, who was transferred to the Department of Justice.

<sup>4</sup> Appointed on April 10, 1918, to substitute Inspector Pedro M. Vélez, who was transferred to the Department of Health.

<sup>5</sup> Appointed on March 27, 1918, to fill the position left vacant by the promotion of Mr. Ramón Rodríguez González.

<sup>6</sup> Appointed on May 5, 1918, to substitute Mr. Ernesto Cordero Ríos, who was transferred to the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor.

## INTRODUCTION.

Since the year 1914, the date of the publication of our special report concerning the great strike of the tobacco workers employed by the Porto Rican American Tobacco Company, although there were in this industry, as well as in others of no less importance, other strikes, no official publication was deemed necessary; the present instance being not only necessary but urgent.

The perturbation suffered this year by several industries and by the public have not been more important than before, but the failures suffered by the laborers in their attitudes and demands have been greater.

With the publication of this short history, the public, whom we believe anxious to know the action taken by the Bureau of Labor in relation to the strikes occurred, will be shown the truth, since in this publication we will expose facts which have taken place, and which have been commented upon by the press of the Island in different ways, establishing ambiguities which we hereby make clear.

It will not be possible for us to detail specifically the measures practiced by this Bureau to conciliate the interests of laborers and employers in dispute, and still less possible to reveal the meetings and conferences of confidential character held. But in the description of our brief account, our impartiality and discretion with which we have acted to avoid the great evils and the disastrous results suffered (due to the interruptions in the industries) by the agricultural laborers this year, as a result of resorting to strikes as a means of self-betterment, will be shown.

Laborers and employers will see and consider for themselves what will be best for their interests in the future.

We will do our duty making recommendations, so that a solid and fraternal peace will be established between the equally important factors of the industrial life and the social progress of the Island.



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## STRIKES OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

On September 7, 1917, a Convention of organized laborers was held in Bayamón, previously called by the leaders of the Free Federation of Labor of Porto Rico.

In this Convention the following resolution was approved:

### PLAN FOR AGREEMENT

FOR THE AGRICULTURAL LABORERS IN THE CULTIVATION OF SUGAR CANE AND AT SUGAR MILLS DURING THE YEAR 1918.

*(Approved at the Second Congress of Agricultural Workers, on the 7th day of September, 1917, at Bayamón, P. R.)*

1. Eight hours shall constitute a day's work.

2. An increase of sixty cents over the wages paid in 1917 in work done by contract or by day.

(As an illustration: Laborers earning 80 cents during the crop of 1916 and 1917 will earn \$1.40 per day, in all work they may do under the same conditions in 1918, and it should be understood that this is the minimum in the scale of salaries established by this contract.)

(Laborers earning one dollar during the last crop will earn one dollar and sixty cents in 1918.)

3. Working hours in all agricultural work will be from 7 to 11 a. m. and from 12 to 4 p. m.

4. All work shall be paid the laborers on Saturdays, beginning at 3 o'clock p. m. Payment will be made in United States currency and in envelopes, in places where work is done, or at the offices of the *central*, or at the residence of the planters for whom the work is done; *Provided*, That said planters will live at a distance of not more than one kilometer from the place where work is done, and that said payment will never be made in stores in which the planters make business with the laborers. No employer, his agent, foreman or planter, is authorized to make any discount from the salaries of any laborer on account of his debts, neither shall he oblige any laborer to make contributions for any purpose, without his previous consent; *And provided, further*, That a week will be considered from Saturday until Friday of next week, whenever employers object that they cannot pay full salaries before seven o'clock p. m. on Saturdays.

5. The law regulating the work of women and children will be strictly observed.

6. No laborer shall be persecuted because of his activities in the management of a strike, or because of any complaint made to employers or foremen in behalf of his companions, and if any have been discharged on this account, he shall be immediately reinstated in his position.

7. Women and children working at the plantations will receive an increase of 25 cents over the salaries they received during last crop, and none shall receive less than 75 cents per day.

8. The relations between employers and employees will be cordial, and for the settlement of any difference or dispute that may arise, the laborers will appoint a committee. This committee shall work for the settlement of the disputes with the employers or their representatives, and while the conference lasts laborers affected will continue work, until an answer is received, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In case the answer of the employers is not satisfactory to the laborers, these may take up the matter before the association or their trade, so that it may decide what is most convenient to do.

9. The terms of this contract must be signed by the manager of the farms, *centrals* or sugar plantations affected in this demand, and by laborers having a legal authority from their companions to represent them in the conference. This agreement will be enforced immediately after its approval and being signed by the parties affected, during the year 1918.

*Additional Clause.*—Ditch-diggers will receive a minimum salary of \$3 per day of seven hours.

#### RULES AND REGULATIONS

##### FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN WORKERS IN SUGAR MILLS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS.

1. Eight hours will constitute a day's work in all labor done at a factory and in the transportation of sugar cane for the factories.

2. General increase of sixty cents per day for all laborers over salaries paid in 1917, taking as a basis the agreements already made, and where these do not exist, the salaries paid as a minimum per day.

3. Ice water and sanitary cups must be provided, and sanitary rules in general strictly observed.

4. No laborer will be persecuted because of having taken prominent part in a strike.

5. All agreements will be made in writing and signed by the representatives of the employers and of the laborers duly elected; *Provided*, That the terms of this contract will be enforced during 1918.

6. All disputes arising will be discussed and settled by a commission of laborers appointed for that purpose, and the representatives of the employers.

7. Employers must grant the laborers the salary that they were perceiving, and shall also assist them by furnishing doctor and medicine. In all other ing, and shall also assist them in furnishing a doctor and medicine. In all other accidents, laborers may make use of the Law of Compensations for accidents suffered by laborers in their work.

(Signed) RAFAEL ALONSO,

*General Secretary of the Free Federation of Labor of Porto Rico.*

In accordance with a circular published by the directors of the above-mentioned laborers' association, which was sent to us at our request, we were informed that upon the beginning of the work of

cutting and grinding the sugar cane of the crop for the year 1917 to 1918, an active campaign for a strike of laborers would also begin, if the employer of that industry would not accede to the petition demanded by the laborers.

Considering the conditions very serious, should the consequences be not prevented by means of conciliation or arbitration before the crop season began, we sent the following circular to the Sugar Growers' Association, to the owners of sugar factories and to sugar-cane growers.

"DECEMBER 4, 1917.

"MANAGER OF THE CENTRAL-----,

"-----, P. R.

"DEAR SIR: Having been informed that laborers, both organized and un-organized, are beginning an agitation with the intention of declaring a strike of agricultural laborers, for the coming harvest, and believing that it will be the interest of all to avoid the conflict, always disastrous for every branch of the industrial activity, allow me to request of you, as I shall also request from the Sugar Growers' Association, the measures which you propose to adopt to prevent opportunely a disturbance that may affect the interests of the parties affected. Your cooperation so as to obtain practical results in favor of our working people would be very praiseworthy and undoubtedly efficacious, and as a consequence, a state of solid harmony would be the satisfactory result.

"Therefore, permit me to request of you a frank and detailed answer concerning this vital issue, and the names and addresses of all your *colonos*, together with any other information which in your judgment would pertain to the purpose of this letter.

"Very sincerely,

(Signed)

"CARMELO HONORÉ,  
"Chief, Bureau of Labor."

Simultaneously, copies of this circular, and letters offering our services were sent by the Bureau of Labor to the Directors of the Free Federation of Labor, first, and later to the Strikers' Committees as soon as the strikes began.

Many letters were returned to us because they were not called for, and many failed to answer.

All the answers received expressed a desire to co-operate with the proposition indicated, with a view to avoid loss and injury to the parties involved in the dreaded conflict. But none of the employers deemed it necessary to hold meetings or conferences to such ends previous to the commencing of the agitation or strike propaganda. All affirmed that there would be no strike; that the



laborers felt satisfied with the salaries received, but that if any industrial trouble occurred, they would have no objections to accede to whatever they in justice demanded.

Notwithstanding the foregoing answers, the faith in an industrial peace sustained by the employers, an active propaganda for strikes commenced at the beginning of January, 1918, and extended throughout the Island, until nearly the end of April, when a great number of sugar factories had finished their grinding.

During the period which we refer to, *i. e.*, from the first week of January to the end of April, the interruptions in the sugar industry may be described as follows:

#### AGUADA.

In this district not more than fifty cane cutters abandoned their work on the 7th of January, demanding increase in salary only. They maintained their attitude during one week, but failed to obtain their aims and returned to their work seven days later, the work of the *central* continuing without interruption until the termination of the year's crop.

#### ARECIBO.

In this district the propaganda for the agricultural workers' strike began practically during the middle of March. The Bureau of Labor, which had made several attempts to prevent a disturbance in the industry of this district, where several important factories are located, insisted upon carrying into effect conferences of laborers and employers to prevent a total stop with disastrous results to the industry and to the great number of employees, but failed in its endeavors.

Neither laborers nor employers accepted the suggestions made by the Bureau with a view to settling the matter with practical results for both parties. The factories denied the existence of a strike, proving that the grinding had not ceased and that they were sure of continuing it to the end, having a sufficient number of laborers satisfied with their salaries.

The Committees named by the laborers in the various districts affected by the movement, declared that they would not return to work without obtaining the approval of the petitions which they had addressed to the employers in accordance with the resolution passed by the convention celebrated at Bayamón.

Unfortunately for the strikers, the *centrals* continued their grinding, working continuously, although not at their full capacity. On

April first an assembly of agricultural workers took place at the "Oliver" Theater in Arecibo, called together by the labor leaders of the district, in order to hear the advices offered by Mr. F. C. Roberts, Special Agent of the Bureau of Conciliation and Arbitration of the Department of Labor of the United States, sent to Porto Rico for the purpose of preventing the stop in the sugar industry, which is considered as an important factor in the present war.

Nearly 600 men were present at the assembly, and after hearing Mr. Roberts' speech, adopted the following resolution:

"The laborers of the *central* 'Los Caños' assembled on the first day of April of 1918, at the city theater and accompanied by Mr. F. C. Roberts, Special Agent of the Department of Labor of the United States, after having heard the reading of a detailed report of said Mr. Roberts requesting in the name of Mr. W. B. Wilson, Secretary of Labor of the United States, that they would return to work, resting assured that the National Government would practise an investigation and would grant justice to the demands made and which have been the cause of the present strike,

"*Resolve:* To return to work after they should receive a cablegram from the Government at Washington guaranteeing that a complete investigation of the production and profits of said *central* would be made within the term of fifteen days by a person appointed by the National Government, and that in accordance with the results of said investigation they would give fair salaries to the laborers who were employed in said *central*;

"*Provided,* That said investigation will be made taking into consideration that most of the work being performed at 'Los Caños' is done by the piece, and that the *hundreds of dollars* which are weekly carried away by the piece-work bosses should not be regarded as money distributed among the laborers as wages; *And provided, further,* That the laborers will be paid the difference that might exist between the two rates of salaries from the time they return to their work to that in which the investigation is over and new salaries fixed, and also will be paid the amount equivalent to the excess in hours of labor from the time work is continued to the date new wages be fixed, according to the number of hours of labor per day, after the investigation, and according to the salary fixed for each."

At the close of the Assembly, in which this Bureau was represented by two of its officers, who accompanied Mr. Roberts, several laborers returned to their work, not all being permitted to return because the employers had already employed many laborers brought from other agricultural districts of the interior of the Island.

The *centrals* continued grinding until the end of the season without further interruption, and without changing the salaries which prevailed, as demanded by the Committees of the strikers, maintaining that the salaries paid satisfied the needs of the laborers who



had substituted the old employees. The strike, therefore, was practically ended in the first week of April, not only without benefit to the strikers but also many of them losing their occupations, which had already been filled by other laborers, coming from the interior of the Island.

#### ARROYO.

On January 29, 1918, as the result of the continued propaganda carried on in this district, so that the laborers would abandon their work, a great number of agricultural laborers employed in the *centrals* and *colonias* here, declared a strike.

The employers maintained the standard salaries, declaring that all persons employed were satisfied with them; and that even if they would suffer delays or troubles during the process of grinding, they would be able to continue until the end of the crop, in the same way they were doing it, and would not accede to the demands of the agitators representing the movement.

After a period of three weeks the laborers returned to their tasks under the same conditions in which they worked at the time they abandoned their work, having failed in all the original petitions that lead them to the strike.

An official of the Bureau of Labor held several conferences with the employers and laborers, endeavoring to end the conflict. All his attempts failed, the employers maintaining that they considered unjust the petitions of the strike directors, inasmuch as they paid a salary equal to or superior to that prevailing in other localities where strikes did not exist.

#### BARCELONETA.

Although from the beginning of January difficulties between employers and agricultural laborers existed, the strike was not formally declared until the beginning of April.

An official of the Bureau of Labor, who with great insistency had tried, in the same manner as in other localities affected by the paralyzation of the industry, to prevent its effects, on the 12th of April informed as follows:

“The *central*, notwithstanding the declaration of strike, continues grinding at full capacity. Factory employees demanded an increase in their salaries which was granted by the manager, allowing them a 25 per cent increase in their salaries. To equalize conditions, an increase of 30 per cent was granted to the machinists and stokers in locomotives. These arrangements were made verbally between employer and laborers. The strike of factory employees produced interruptions in the grinding, but after the 9th instant the work continued normally.

"About 900 *peons* work in the *central*, excluding its *colonias*.

"There are also surplus workers from adjacent districts who are dwelling in the quarters of the *central*.

"Salaries of agricultural workers continue the same as before, without increase.

"Many laborers with whom I talked seemed content and desirous of continuing their work without interruption; others are partisans of the strike."

#### CAGUAS.

The factory located here does not employ laborers in cane cultivation.

On the night of January 28, 1918, seventy factory employees of the "Santa Juana" Central held a meeting in which they resolved to suspend work unless a favorable answer was given to the following demand, within ten hours:

"(a) That an increase of 50 cents per day be made in the salaries, beginning with the minimum paid during the past year's crop, which was \$1.10.

"(b) That eight hours will constitute a working day.

"(c) That they would permit a committee composed of laborers to be named from among the factory workers, which would be commissioned to settle any disputes between employers and employees.

"(d) That they would permit lunch to be brought in at whatever time it arrived.

"(e) That no laborer be discharged because of having taken active part in the strike.

"(f) Better treatment from the engineer, who has been thus far provoking a conflict which the laborers desire to avoid, and that on "cleaning days" laborers from the factory be employed, and not strangers.

"(g) That as an act of kindness and regard for the personnel who has been working at the factory for a number of years, Pablo Acosta and Colo Alejandro be readmitted at the factory to do the work they did before, or any other.

"And finally, that after a study of the matter, we have decided to allow ten hours' time to answer this petition, beginning at the time of its delivery, 8 a. m."

The *central* decided to answer the petition, and in a letter addressed to its employees, essentially made the following proposition:

"To maintain the prices paid during the previous week, allowing to each laborer at the end of each week a 15 per cent bonus which had been offered to be paid at the end of the crop, provided that they would guarantee to end the present crop under these conditions."

The *central* agreed to this, and notified the laborers, who returned another, amending the original, in which they proposed an increase of 20 cents a day in the wages of each and all laborers, giving as

a reason for this preference the fact that the 15 per cent bonos offered benefitted some laborers more than others, while the cost of living had increased equally for all.

The *central* agreed to this, and notified the laborers, who returned to work.

The strike only lasted 36 hours, with full success for the strikers.

#### CAROLINA.

In this district the strike was declared on the 20th of March, the propaganda continuing until the beginning of April.

The employers maintained on all occasions in which the Bureau intervened in order to avert the threatened strike, at first, and later to settle the strike already declared by the agitators, that no such state of industrial perturbation existed. It is undeniable that the factory did not, during several days, have the full number of employees for its ordinary production.

It could be proven that many laborers employed in different plantations abandoned their work; that a large number of employees were not satisfied with their wages; that others joined strikers for fear of persecution by strikers.

The work in the factory was not stopped until it was necessary, in order to repair the machinery. It was also proven that notwithstanding the fact that new laborers were employed, the situation was abnormal for three or four weeks.

In an effort to terminate the conflict, an arbitration committee co-operating with the Bureau of Labor, consisting of laborers, was formed and accepted by the employers.

Both failed in the attempt. The laborers refused to reconsider their petitions and the employers did not deem it necessary to hold a conference, stating that no strike existed, that they were paying fair wages, and could terminate the season with the men already employed, to whom they had been paying a 15 per cent bonus each week, in addition to their regular salaries.

#### CANÓVANAS.

In this district an active propaganda was made by prominent members of the Free Federation of Labor, who succeeded in inducing many laborers to abandon their work. The *central* does not employ laborers in the cultivation of cane. The grinding was not interrupted, notwithstanding a lack of agricultural workers to supply the mills, and a lively state of strike existed throughout the season.



The disturbance in the grinding only lasted a few days. The strikers failed to obtain any benefit whatever, although they maintained their attitude in various farms for several weeks.

#### FAJARDO.

On the 4th of March the agricultural laborers of Fajardo, Luquillo, Mameyes, Ceiba and a few *colonias* of Río Grande declared a strike.

Several members of the Free Federation of Labor were designated by that organization to lead the strikers, beginning their work on the 8th of March. From that date until the 15th, order prevailed; but since that date the central which had been unable to work at full capacity, brought laborers from other towns, and the propaganda carried on by labor agitators was continued with greater intensity and energy.

In this movement about 4,000 laborers were involved. Representatives of the Bureau of Labor were sent to the districts affected by the strikes, to insist on the solution of the conflict by means of conciliation or arbitration, which the Bureau had already attempted several months before. With a similar object in view Mr. F. C. Robers also visited the workers, but likewise without success.

At first, the employers expressed their desire to discuss the situation with a Committee appointed by the laborers of the district. The labor agitators opposed, and since then the *central* openly refused to hold any conference, stating that it preferred to continue grinding under the existing conditions, regardless of the fact that the expenses were decidedly greater as a result of employing inexperienced laborers.

The employers, as a whole, maintained that they were paying high salaries; higher than those paid in other districts, where no strike was declared, and where not even an active propaganda had existed, and that they had offered a 15 per cent bonus at the end of the crop to all laborers, who had been loyal during the crop. Resting on this fact, they formally declared that they could not grant the increase demanded by the leaders of the movement representing the strikers.

The employers continued bringing laborers from other districts until they had a sufficient number to substitute the strikers. The laborers denounced the fact to the Bureau of Labor and this, believing there was probably a violation of Act 17, approved by the Legislature in 1917, entitled "An Act to Determine Certain Duties of

Employers in Cases of Strikes," filed suits against one of the most prominent employers of the district and his agents, on charge of bringing laborers to substitute the strikers without letting it be known to them that a state of strike existed in the place where they were going to work.

Act No. 17 to which we refer. reads as follows:

"Section 1.—That when any employer or owner of a factory or agricultural estate, or mercantile or industrial establishment of any kind, or any of their agents or representatives, during a general strike of their laborers or employees of any class or during a lockout, advertises in the newspapers, or by means of bills or in any other form, for laborers and employees of any class, or employs agents to solicit or personally solicits persons to work in place of such strikers, he shall state clearly and precisely in all such advertisements, whether written or verbal, the fact that a strike or lockout exists.

"Section 2.—That if any person, firm, association or corporation, labor agent or representative violates the provisions of this Act, such person, corporation, firm, association, agent or representative shall be punished by fine not to exceed one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in jail for not more than one hundred days, or by both penalties, in the discretion of the court, for each violation."

The laborers brought to fill the places of strikers were given, besides their regular salaries of \$1.50 for eight hours' work per day, free transportation, meals and lodging.

The strike ended in the middle of April, when its directors, considering the continuance of the strike a failure, instructed the laborers as to the convenience of returning to work, it being the only means of preventing greater misery in the laborers' homes, as the laborers brought to take their places began to fix their residences in the district, which fact constituted a serious menace for the future economical and social conditions of the former laborers, who were unable to move to other districts.

#### GUAYAMA.

During the month of February the laborers who worked in the cutting of sugar cane in this district began a strike movement directed by several labor leaders.

According to information obtained, the strike did not gain sufficient ground and its agitators abandoned the campaign. In April, in accordance with a statement issued by the Executive Council of the Free Federation of Labor in Porto Rico, a state of strike was declared to exist in that district, and several representatives of said institution, coming from other districts, arrived there in order to maintain the state of strike, which was supposed to exist.



They found that no strike existed, but that the laborers' will could be easily moved by means of an active propaganda, and they began the campaign.

Several meetings were held, all of which were well attended, and again a strike was officially declared. With this declaration came other movements, similar to the first, which also failed, the influence of the propaganda being felt every time laborers came in touch with it.

Although a state of strike existed since February in all the district, works practically were never completely stopped.

The number of agricultural laborers employed in the sugar-cane plantations in this district, is approximately 5,000, including women and children. An examination of the pay-rolls corresponding to the month of January proved these figures to be correct.

On Saturday, April 6, 1918, although the influence of strike propaganda was being felt on several important colonies, and as a rule many cane cutters did not attend to the work, the rest of the laborers worked as usual.

The strike situation was fully discussed by the Bureau of Labor with them all: With the owners of large plantations, with labor leaders, with the police, with sugar-cane growers, with agricultural laborers, with overseers and with the foremen.

It happened in this district that at nights a number of laborers gathered around the agitators in their meetings, applauding, giving hurrahs for the strike, and expressing their intention to follow the strike movement, but on the following morning at daybreak, they took their tools, followed their way to the fields and did their days' work.

The work here was generally done by piece. Each morning the laborer and the overseer agreed as to the price of the work he was to do, before beginning it. The overseers offered a certain amount for the work and the laborer accepted or refused. Work done "by the day" was very scarce, and overseers tried their best to have all the work done by the piece system.

The strike ended without success for the laborers. The employers maintained the wages which had previously prevailed, and in some cases offered a bonus of 15 per cent to all workers who would continue working regularly until the season closed.

#### HUMACAO.

In this district there were several partial strikes. The first took

place on the 7th of January, and ended the following day, by an agreement between laborers and employers, without benefit for the laborers.

None of the strikes was of much importance, until finally during the middle of February, the greater part of the laborers went on strike, excepting those who directly belonged to the central nearest the city.

The industrial peace of the district became definitely established after the laborers and employers had reached an agreement, on the seventh of March, on the following basis:

“(1) The laborers will return to work on the plantations which have accepted this agreement, beginning on March 7, 1918.

“(2) From this date the following wages will be paid:

“(A) For cutting cane, one dollars and fifteen cents per day for eight hours' work.

“(B) The car drivers will be paid one dollars and fifteen cents for nine hours' work.

“(C) The men engaged in the cultivation of cane shall earn ninety cents.

“(D) Women and children shall earn, respectively, sixty and seventy-five cents per day, eight hours' work. All children under sixteen years of age shall be required to work only seven hours per day.

“(3) The preceding salaries are to be taken as the minimum, without establishing a maximum limit, this being left to be fixed by the employer, who in establishing it will consider the quality of the work and the laborers' efficiency.

“(4) The work of ditch-digging, plowing, carting and packing will be done by the piece.

“(5) All work shall be done, if possible, collectively by piece in order to have the laborers get the benefit themselves.

“(6) No laborer shall be discharged because of having taken prominent part in the strike, nor be denied work at any farm for that reason.

“(7) The relation between employers and employees shall be respectful and cordial. A Committee shall be appointed by the laborers to solve any difference which may arise between laborers and employers or their representatives. While conferences are being held between the employers and employees, the laborers shall continue working until the conference is over. In case no satisfactory decision for the laborers be obtained, the case will be put to the decision of their union, which will in an assembly decide what to do.

“(8) The working hours shall be from seven to eleven and from twelve to four, except in case of different agreement between laborers and employers.

“(9) This agreement is made and will be fulfilled to their best understanding by the signers, who swear by their word of honor to follow it during the crop season of 1918.”

This agreement was signed before the Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Labor, who from the beginning had been trying to settle

the conflict by means of arbitration, and had had to work hard in undoing the sentiment of hostility between employers and employees.

The agreement was not accepted by some *colonias*, and the above-mentioned *central* did not take part in the conference nor suffered consequences of the strike, even when it paid the same salaries paid by *colonias*. Notwithstanding this, the laborers quietly continued working until the end of the crop, and even working in the plantations of the employers who refused to sign the agreement.

This strike lasted only a few days, and the only practical benefit obtained by the laborers, was the written agreement, since the wages in the agreement were equal to those being paid in most of the plantations during the present crop.

#### NAGUABO.

Although the employers of this district at first refused to consider the petition of the laborers, after a conference held with the officials of the Bureau of Labor, and considering their suggestions just, reconsidered their attitude and granted the demands made by the strikers of the district. Notwithstanding this concession, the strikers still continued to refuse to work, claiming that the close proximity of this *central* to those at Fajardo and surrounding districts would tend to produce great difficulties in the solution of the strikers problem of those districts, if they returned to work in Naguabo.

Consequently the employers of Naguabo, following the example set by those of Fajardo and other localities affected by the strikes, continued their work using men who refused to follow the strikers, laborers living in the farms, and laborers brought from other districts.

Although with no few interruptions, and at great expense, the neighboring *central* continued its grinding until the end of the crop, without acceding to the demands of the laborers.

In this strike the laborers obtained increase in wages, the strikers not being the ones benefitted by it, those benefitted being the ones brought from other districts, and those who did not join the strikes in the district.

#### MAMEYES, LUQUILLO AND CEIBA.

The greater part of the plantations in these districts cultivate their cane for the Fajardo Central. The agricultural laborers employed in these places declared a strike at the same time as the Fajardo laborers, and presented the same demands. They were,



therefore, subject to practically the same troubles and misfortunes suffered by the Naguabo laborers.

#### PATILLAS.

In this district the agricultural laborers began propaganda for a strike during the second week of January. In a meeting held on the night of January 11 it was decided to formally declare a strike as soon as the cane cutting began, but not later than the 29th of that month. Consequently, on that date a great number of laborers employed in the cutting and cultivation of sugar-cane abandoned their work. By the intervention of the Bureau of Labor, the employers who had refused to have anything to do with the laborers, alleging that they were not affected by any such strike, finally consented to have a conference with the laborers of the district for the purpose of discussing the demands submitted to them. But as the employers demanded that the leaders of the strike, who were not regular workers, properly speaking, would not be admitted to the conference, it could not be held, as the laborers did not accept these conditions.

As in other districts, laborers from different towns were brought to take the places of those who refused to work. The grinding continued without interruption, although the output was less than usual and the expenses greater.

The laborers, disorganized, lacking sufficient resources for their support and for the continuation of their attitude, returned to their tasks on the 19th of February, without having benefitted themselves in the least.

#### RÍO GRANDE.

On March 21 a telegram was received by the Bureau of Labor with the information that a Committee of laborers, affiliated to the Free Federation of Labor had declared a strike. The laborers asked the employers to sign an agreement increasing the wages of \$1 and \$1.25 which they were receiving for a day of eight hours' work, to \$1.50 for the duration of the crop.

This strike, although only partial, brought great trouble in the industrial activity for the cultivation of coming crops, and great losses of extraordinary importance for the employers affected. It was impossible, however, to hold a conference of laborers and employees, and naturally the industrial peace was broken until the

beginning of March, when the movement failed and the strikers returned to their tasks.

In this district there were some employers who were willing to grant all that the strikers demanded, due to fear of great loss in the preparation of their plantations, even when alleging that the salaries they paid were higher than those paid in some districts where no strike existed nor even a propaganda for same.

The sugar factory in this district did not suffer a complete stop or any great loss in their regular production.

#### RINCÓN.

In this district there was a partial strike that lasted only eight days. Twenty-five laborers of an important sugar plantation suspended work on January 7, demanding increase in wages. Their petition was not granted and they decided not to return to work on the same plantation, but accepted work on a neighboring plantation, belonging to the same central, at the same rate.

Notwithstanding the low salaries paid in this region, there were no more strikes, and the work went on as usual, without interruption.

#### VEGA BAJA.

The strike began on January 14, at 6 a. m. More than three hundred agricultural laborers took part. The laborers did not make their petitions in the regular way, but instructed their leader to have a conference with the employer and demand better wages and better conditions in their work. The leader put forth his best efforts in behalf of the laborers, and although not fully successful in his attempt, he was called on the 25th of that same month by the employer, to sign the following contract, which was agreed by both parties:

#### "Salaries that will Prevail During the the Sugar Crop of 1918.

	Minimum Salary	
	With food for one meal.	Without food for one meal.
Cane cutters .....	\$1.00	\$1.10
Removing rails .....	1.05	1.15
Wagon loaders .....	1.00	1.10
Loaders ... ..	0.85	0.95
Women and children ... ..	0.50	0.60
Ditch Diggers.....	By piece	

"No striker will be suspended because of having shown activity during the strike."



This contract being signed, the laborers proclaimed that they had won the strike and work was resumed. The majority preferred the wages without food. Rations generally consisted of rice and beans, corn flour, and codfish, distributed in single lots, with bread. The food was cooked by a contractor or man in charge who provided it at a maximum cost of ten cents per ration.

#### VEGA ALTA.

The laborers from this district, nearly five hundred in number, went on strike on January 14, 1917. All laborers from the different plantations did not join the movement and it failed shortly after it began. An active propaganda under the direction of members of the Free Federation continued and its effects were felt on the first of April, when a new strike was begun.

The strike lasted a week, practically, all laborers resuming work and only a part of them being benefitted on returning to work.

The *central* made separate agreements with some employees and these convinced the others to return to work.

The laborers obtaining the highest increase in their salaries were those at the factory and in the railway system, as they thought that these were the ones who could cause the greatest losses to the industry, which, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, never had their mills stopped.

#### YABUCOA.

In this district, although an active campaign was made to have a general strike of agricultural laborers in the sugar-cane industry, work was in no way interrupted. Before serious disturbances occurred, a meeting called by the Bureau of Labor was held, in which both laborers and employers were present, and also the Chief of the Bureau. After a lengthy discussion of all conditions which should prevail during the sugar-cane crop to safeguard the industrial peace, a contract was signed, which read thus:

“1. The laborers will be paid a minimum salary of 95 cents per day of eight hours. In addition, a 15 per cent bonus will be paid weekly.

“2. Railroad workers will be paid \$1.25 per day which will end not later than 6 p. m. In addition, a 15 per cent bonus will be paid weekly. All work after 6 p. m. shall be paid for at the rate of 15 cents per hour, the 15 per cent bonus to be paid also.

“3. Ditch diggers will receive \$1 for every day of eight hours' work and the 15 per cent bonus, to be paid weekly.

"4. Loading will be paid for at the rate of 13 cents per wagonload for plant cane or 15 cents for ratoons, plus the 15 per cent bonus.

"5. Work will begin at 7 a. m. and cease at 12 m. It will be resumed at 1 p. m. and end at 4 p. m.

"6. Those who arrive late to their work need not be accepted, but once accepted a proportional sum shall be deducted from their wages.

"7. Extra work will be paid for at the usual rates and the 15 per cent bonus will apply.

"8. Women will be paid a minimum salary of 55 cents per day of eight hours' work, plus the regular bonus of 15 per cent.

"9. No restraint will be exerted against any laborer by reason of his political or religious belief or because of his activities as a striker, except in the case of any punishable offense.

"10. These wages will be paid during the crop season of 1918, and the bonus also. After the crop is over, a minimum salary of 75 cents per day of eight hours will be paid.

"11. The relations between employer and laborers will be respectful and cordial, and in case any disputes arise a Committee will be appointed to solve them. This Committee shall endeavor to reach an agreement satisfactory to the parties affected and the laborers shall continue working while the Committee is at work in the solution of the disputes. In case no agreement is reached, the matter will be carried before the laborers' association and discussed, and a decision taken.

"YABUOCA, P. R., *January 12, 1918.*"

On February 9, nearly one month after they signed the contract, the laborers complained that the employers had violated the terms of the contract and carried the same before an assembly of their association, declaring that the agreement signed was not good.

The employers, on the other hand, alleged at the same time infringement on the part of the laborers, and made use of the decision taken by the assembly of the laborers to act accordingly.

Nevertheless, although both parties considered from that date that they were not bound to obey the contract, they still continued their friendly attitude, seemingly obeying the clauses of the contract.

Work at the *central* was at no time interrupted, although the laborers did not succeed in having their wages raised to the standard originally demanded.

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The results in each case, as seen in the preceding paragraph, are clear and complete. Only 25 per cent of the number of districts involved in the strike obtained successful results; but nowhere at the full extent of the wishes and ambitions of the laborers, not even in the proportion necessary to meet the high increase in the cost of

living. Besides, the places where some success was obtained were not the places where the greater number of laborers joined the movement.

In those places where the propaganda was most active and where the most energetic agitators tried their best to inspire vigor to the movement, the difficulties were the greatest and the employers most inexorable in their attitudes. On that account, due to that mingling of sentiments and passions, the failure of the laborers to obtain their aspirations and the great losses suffered by the employers in the industry.

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### **BAKERS' STRIKE.**

#### **PONCE.**

The bakers of this important city, considering the actual economical crisis, due to the high cost of living, and being unable to work for more than five days in the week, on account of a resolution of the Food Commission, resolved, in an assembly duly called to that effect, to submit to their employers a petition with the measures which should be put in force for the betterment of the conditions of the persons engaged in the industry.

The aforesaid demand was handed to all employers, by a Committee appointed for the purpose. They refused to give any consideration to the demands and to discuss the matter in order to prevent the conflict.

Consequently, with their situation unchanged and their economical condition becoming harder and harder every day, it was decided, in an assembly held on February 13, to begin strike against those employers who would refuse to grant better conditions to those engaged in the industry.

As soon as the Bureau of Labor heard of the negotiations carried on by the laborers, it offered its best services to both employers and employees, and at their request, worked until the dispute was settled.

On February 19, at 3 p. m., by mediation of the Bureau of Labor, the first meeting was held. A favorable solution was not obtained and it was necessary to adjourn until next day, when a new session was held and some employers, after a long and reasonable discussion, reached an agreement in order to continue work. The accepted agreement reads thus:



"The salaries of laborers working at nights will be as follows:

Foremen .....	\$2. 25
Assistant foremen.....	2. 00
Workers in wooden bowls.....	1. 75
Common bakers.....	1. 60
Assistants .....	1. 00

"Salaries of bakers working in day time:

Foremen .....	1. 75
Assistant foremen.....	1. 60
Workers in wooden bowls.....	1. 35
Common bakers.....	1. 25
Assistants .....	. 85

"The standard salaries will refer to ordinary number of hours.

"Bakers will resume work in the bakeries whose owners have signed this agreement.

"Bakers shall work gladly and willingly, forgetting all evil thoughts about this last strike, and shall observe the rules governing the work inside the shop.

"The employers will keep friendly relations with the bakers and will pay their wages daily, after the day's work is over.

"In the shops, labor and sanitation laws will be observed.

"On resuming work it is agreed that all workers in strike shall be readmitted, it being understood that they shall not be discharged on account of having joined the strikers.

"The shop owners will allow bakers to alternate in the work, so that all may work for a number of days in the week.

"Any dispute between the patrons and bakers will be settled by the arbitration committee named by the Union of Bakers for that purpose.

"The preceding rules shall be strictly observed."

This assembly was presided over by two employees of the Bureau of Labor and the mayor of the city. Not all the owners of bakeries were present and the strike was ended only in several of the shops affected. The others who refused to accept this agreement continued with their difficulties.

Those in charge of the sale and delivery of bread were also involved in the strike, but in the contracts they were not mentioned, the terms applying to bakers only.

It was generally agreed by patrons and strikers that those engaged in the sale and distribution of bread received a fairly good salary and could endure better the existing conditions of the industry.

A few days later the remaining employers, except one, complied with the rules accepted at the assembly and continued working.

The public in general was pleased with the success of the bakers, although partial.

The employers recognized the fairness of the demands of the bakers, and no further interruption occurred.

#### PEÑUELAS.

On May 1, 1918, bakers declared a strike, asking for higher wages.

The Bureau of Labor was notified of the strike and its intervention asked for.

On the fourth of that same month the employers, through the intervention of an employee of the Bureau of Labor, met a committee of strikers and an agreement was reached whose main clauses were the following:

"1. For each 200 pounds of wheat flour and 50 pounds of potato, or other substitute, the bakers will prepare 260 pounds of bread and will receive pay of \$2.50.

"2. In the manufacture of crackers, for every 200 pounds of wheat flour, plus any quantity of substitute, the bakers are to receive \$2.50.

"3. In reckoning the weight of crackers, the net weight of the flour and substitutes will be considered.

\* \* \* \* \*

"7. Employers must accord good treatment to their employees and wages must be paid daily, after their task is over.

\* \* \* \* \*

"No laborer shall be dismissed for having taken part in the strike movement."

This agreement was reached amicably, and the laborers returned to their work.

#### YAUCO.

On the 24th of May a strike occurred here in two bakeries. The Bureau of Labor offered its services, which were accepted by the laborers, but the employers refused to discuss the matter. However, within two days a solution was reached, pending a written agreement between the conflicting parties.

The total number of men on strike did not exceed sixty.



## STRIKE OF MOTORMEN AND CONDUCTORS OF THE PORTO RICO RAILWAY, LIGHT & POWER COMPANY.

On the 26th of September, 1917, at 6 p. m., one hundred and fifty-five employees of the electric cars went on strike in San Juan. The following day the Bureau was informed that the strikers had submitted to the Manager of the company the petitions which they demanded to resume work.

Among others, these were the most important:

"Increase in salary up to 30 per cent per hour.

"Better treatment on the part of the inspectors and directors of the company.

"Expulsion of one inspector accused of having badly treated both conductors and motormen.

"That no employee should be discharged without giving his case sufficient consideration.

"That employees should not be prohibited to form a union of their trade."

The Bureau of Labor immediately sent the following letter to the manager of the company:

"SEPTEMBER 28, 1917.

"MR. O. M. SEWELL,

*"Manager, P. R. Railway, Light & Power Co.,*

*(Through the Commissioner of Agric. & Labor),*

*"San Juan, P. R.*

"DEAR SIR: Having had knowledge that the street-car conductors and motormen employed by your company went on strike Wednesday evening, I beg to offer you the services of this Bureau toward settling this controversy.

"Investigations as to the attitude of the strikers were made yesterday by this Bureau, and it seems that it will not be very difficult to settle it at an early date if you kindly accept to take part in a meeting where both employer and employees be present for the discussion of the demands made by the strikers.

"This meeting can be held at any hour and place you may designate.

"Hoping this letter will meet with your acceptance and with the same spirit with which it is written, I beg to remain,

"Yours respectfully,

(Signed)

"CARMELO HONORÉ,

*"Chief, Bureau of Labor."*

On the same day the following answer was received:

"SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO, September 28, 1917.

"MR. CARMELO HONORÉ,

*Chief, Bureau of Labor,*

*San Juan, P. R.*

"DEAR SIR: I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of even date and to say that the places of the majority of the men which left the Company's service Wednesday evening have already been filled and that the necessary steps

have already been taken to fill the places of the others. Therefore, we deem it unnecessary to have further communication, through conference or otherwise, with such former employees, or to avail ourselves of your friendly offer of intervention.

"The only thing which occurs to me at the moment that you might do that would likely help matters, would be to use the good offices of yourself and your Department to the fullest extent in an effort to induce the men who left this Company's services Wednesday, and their sympathizers, to refrain from committing acts of violence and intimidating the Company's employees who have taken their places. If you can do anything in that direction you will have rendered a great service to this Company and to the public.

"Yours very truly.

(Signed)

"O. M. SEWELL,

"President."

Notwithstanding the preceding refusal, the Bureau insisted upon appealing to the fairness and administrative ability of Mr. Sewell, in order that he would consent to a conference with his old employees, as a more adequate and feasible means to end the conflict. The Bureau's efforts were successful, and a meeting was held on September 29, at 10 a. m., at the company's office.

The discussion of the demands lasted three hours, but it was not possible to reach an agreement.

On October 1, upon receipt of the following letter, all efforts were considered to have been futile.

"SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO, *October 1, 1917.*

"MR. CARMELO HONORÉ,

"Chief, Bureau of Labor,

"San Juan, P. R.

"DEAR SIR: In reply to your personal appeal this forenoon in behalf of the conductors and motormen who went on strike last Wednesday, I have to say that in view of the refusal of the men to accept our proposition of Saturday, which was the best we could offer, we have gone ahead employing new men with the view of filling the places vacated by the strikers, a large number of the vacancies have already been filled with good, reliable men and it would not be fair to throw these new men out now to make room for those who went on strike.

"I am exceedingly sorry for the old men (and their families), who must suffer for the loss of their positions through having been thrown into the strike unwillingly, but there is nothing we can do for them now further than to take back such of them as may be acceptable to the Company and for which we have vacancies without displacing any of the new men. The rest of the old men will have to seek employment elsewhere.

"Yours very truly,

(Signed)

"O. M. SEWELL,

"President."

Although the foregoing letter served to explain itself, in convincing us of the futility of trying to settle affairs, we nevertheless continued.

Although a great number of unexperienced hands were used and great difficulties encountered, these were rapidly overcome and the services of the old employers rendered unnecessary.

The employer showed no intention whatever of reinstating them.

The strikers, who showed great diversity of opinion regarding further continuance of the struggle, finally sought the Bureau of Labor in the hope that through its intervention they might all be reinstated and their right to associate be recognized, dictating rules for mutual respect between directors and employees of the Company.

Although the Manager at first openly refused to reconsider his decision of declaring the positions of the strikers vacant, he accepted an invitation for an interview with the Governor, for the purpose of settling the abnormal condition of the traffic, which was being greatly censured by the public.

Finally, on October 2, the old employees were informed that they might return to their work immediately, having obtained some slight benefits among the most important of which are the following:

“Increase in wages based on the number of years each employee had served the company.

“Right to organize was recognized, and the formation of a local union for the defense of their interests in general and the mutual protection of its associates.

“The right of the employees to appoint a Committee to settle any disputes that might arise.

“It was considered reasonable that no employee would be discharged without proper trial, and other measures of great moral value were taken.

“Besides this, the manager donated \$100 to cover the expenses of establishing their local union.”

Once the laborers returned to their work, they worked faithfully to establish their union.

At present, their Association has progressed greatly in the social and economical fields and has plans for future betterment. It has been the means of obtaining new increases in wages as well as other benefits.

## **OTHER STRIKES.**

### **AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.**

At Bayamón, by the middle of the month of January, a strike of agricultural workers occurred in several sugar plantations. It



lasted only a week, the laborers returning to work under the same conditions.

#### **SHOEMAKERS' STRIKE.**

Among shoemakers, our records show strikes at Arecibo, Ponce, Caguas and Yabucoa. They obtained slight increases in wages, but so light that none of them obtained an increase of 20 per cent.

#### **STRIKE OF HELPERS.**

(CONSTRUCTION WORK.)

Among the men of these occupations, a strike occurred, in San Juan, about the middle of February, involving about one hundred and twenty-five men, all employed by the same employer. The wages earned ranged from 14 to 17 cents per hour, and a general increase to 20 cents per hour for all was asked. The employer agreed to pay 16 cents per hour to those earning 14 and 15 cents before the strike, and 17 cents per hour to those earning 15 and 16 cents. This strike lasted only a week, during which time work continued uninterruptedly. The success, although partial, was beneficial to all.

Another strike among men engaged in construction work being done under contract for the municipality occurred during the first week of March. The strikers, about one hundred and twenty-five in number, asked for higher wages. They were granted 17 cents per hour as a minimum during a day of eight hours' work.

#### **STRIKE OF MASONS OR BRICKLAYERS.**

Only one strike of masons occurred during last year, according to our records. This began on the 29th of April. It was favorably settled on May 4—that is, five days after it began.

The causes of this strike may be stated as follows: Several masons, skillful in different branches of their trade, were working for an employer who had a contract to make some construction work for the Insular Government. They secured work with a foreman in another division of the same building and left the work they were doing, as the new work offered them better salary. The superintendent of the work refused to allow these masons to continue work in the new branch, claiming reasons that the workers did not deem proper, and all decided to abandon the work, demanding that the foremen be given power to employ whoever they wished, in doing the particular kind of work entrusted to their care, without the intervention of any one else, provided the work could be done right.



The employer in this case, considering the demands of the workers reasonable and the attitude of his representative improper, accepted the propositions of the strikers, and then all the workers (the ones causing the strike also included) returned to their work on the morning of May 6, two days after the agreement was made.

### STRIKE AMONG TOBACCO WORKERS.

#### AGUAS BUENAS.

Thirty-seven tobacco strippers declared a strike on September 21 and did not resume work until the end of December.

There was also a strike of cigarmakers, at that same date, in which there were about three hundred men involved. Both were intervened by the Joint Advisory Board appointed the preceding year at the General Assembly of laborers of the tobacco industry.

#### ARECIBO.

Seventy-five tobacco strippers declared a strike on May 27, 1918. It lasted only one day. The Bureau of Labor intervened and succeeded in obtaining an increase of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent over the preceding wages.

#### BAYAMÓN.

One hundred and thirty-seven strippers were on strike from October 27 to December 26, 1917. Nine hundred and forty-two cigarmakers were also on strike during that same period, and their strike was settled through the same intervention, the Joint Advisory Board.

#### BARCELONETA.

Sixty-seven strippers, who were earning 30 cents a day, declared a strike on the 29th of August. The stop lasted only until the 5th of September, when an increase of 25 per cent was obtained through the intervention of the Bureau of Labor.

#### CATAÑO.

Two strikes of tobacco strippers occurred during the year, due to different causes and affecting the same number of persons.

The first was caused by the refusal of the employer to increase their wages, and the second to the improper treatment accorded the women by a foreman whose removal was demanded by the employees.

The first strike was won by the strikers, who obtained an increase of 20 per cent over their salaries, but the second failed, as the foreman was not removed, and the laborers returned to their tasks upon

the assurance of the employer that the conduct of the foreman would be rectified to meet the complaints of the workers.

The Bureau of Labor intervened in both these strikes.

#### CAGUAS.

There were several strikes among the tobacco strippers here. One was caused by the bad quality of the tobacco and another by poor wages. Sixty-eight workers went on strike the first time and five hundred and fifty the second.

There was also another small strike involving thirty-two women.

All were intervened by the Joint Advisory Board and were favorably settled by an agreement between employer and employees.

In another factory eighty cigarmakers went on strike, the Joint Advisory Board intervening.

#### CAYEY.

Eighteen strippers in a tobacco factory declared a strike on the 27th of October, 1917, and did not resume work until December 26. Two hundred and sixty-five cigarmakers were on strike at the same time.

#### CIDRA.

Ten strippers and one hundred and thirty-nine cigarmakers declared a strike here. It was intervened by the Joint Advisory Board.

#### COAMO.

A strike of tobacco strippers occurred here. The Bureau of Labor intervened through one of its representatives. A conference was held by employers and employees, and after discussing the demands of the latter, an increase of 10 per cents over the preceding wages was granted them.

#### MOROVIS.

A strike of tobacco strippers, due to the low salaries existing, began on November 5 and ended on December 9. The strikers, through an agreement made directly between employer and employees, obtained increases in their salaries.

#### MANATÍ.

Three hundred and fifty-three cigarmakers held a strike from September 19 to December 26. The Joint Advisory Board intervened in its settlement.

#### MAYAGÜEZ.

One hundred and fifteen cigarmakers held a strike from Decem-

ber 23, 1917, to January 9, 1918. An increase in wages was obtained in various cigar shapes (*vitolas*), ranging from 50 cents to \$1 per thousand.

It was settled directly between employer and employees.

#### NARANJITO.

Eighty-seven strippers abandoned their work on December 17. They did not resume work until December 31. They demanded an increase of 5 cents per standard weight (*pesada*) and were granted an increase of 2 cents. The agreement was made directly by negotiations between employer and employees.

#### PEÑUELAS.

Forty-six strippers declared a strike on October 21 and it lasted until December 26. It was settled by the Joint Advisory Board.

Eighty-seven cigarmakers held a strike during that same period and it was also settled by the Joint Advisory Board.

#### PONCE.

Three hundred and seventy-five strippers held a strike which began on October 21. The conflict was settled and ended on December 26. An agreement was reached, the terms of which we have not been able to find exactly.

Three hundred and forty cigarmakers were also on strike during that same period. In both strikes the Joint Advisory Board intervened.

#### SAN LORENZO.

Two strikes of tobacco strippers occurred here. The first began on September 26 and ended on December 26. Ninety-five persons were involved. The Joint Advisory Board intervened.

In the second, which began on November 23 and ended on December 14, one hundred and fifty-one laborers were involved. They returned to work without any increase in wages. We did not intervene.

There was also a strike of cigarmakers in which two hundred and eighty-four persons were involved. It lasted from September 26 to December 26. The Joint Advisory Board intervened. The results are unknown to us.

#### SAN JUAN.

Our records show three strikes of tobacco strippers, while occurred during the months of September to December, inclusive.



There were five hundred and fifty-eight workers in the first, about one hundred and fifty in the second and nearly two hundred in the last. In this last one the Bureau of Labor intervened and an increase of 20 per cent was obtained.

The others were intervened by the Joint Advisory Board and we have no data regarding the results.

There was also a strike of cigarmakers and the number of strikers was one thousand two hundred and twenty-seven. The Joint Advisory Board held negotiations with the employer and an agreement was reached. The workers obtained fairly good benefits.

#### TOA ALTA.

Two strikes of tobacco strippers occurred here, in both of which about forty persons were involved. The first was due to a demand for higher wages, and was terminated with an increase of 20 per cent. The Bureau of Labor intervened.

The second was due to complaints against a foreman. It was settled satisfactorily within two days. There was also a strike of about twenty-five cigarmakers. They obtained an increase in wages in a proportion of not less than 15 nor more than 20 per cent. It commenced on August 14 and ended on August 22, 1917. The Bureau of Labor intervened.

#### UTUADO.

A strike of tobacco strippers occurred here, by reason of the low wages paid, but it failed because of the excess of laborers in the district. The strikers resumed work without obtaining any benefit.

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There were also strikes in other branches of this same industry in—

*Bayamón.*—Two hundred and ninety-seven workers. Began on October 26 and ended on December 26, 1917.

*Cajey.*—Sixty-eight workers. Strike begun on October 27 and ended on December 26.

*Cidra.*—Forty-six laborers

*Manatí.*—One hundred and fifty-four laborers. From September 19 to December 26.

*San Lorenzo.*—Thirty-five laborers. From September 26 to December 26.

*San Juan.*—One thousand three hundred and sixty-six. Occurred at the same time as that of the cigarmakers.

In these strikes agreements were made through conferences be-

tween the Joint Advisory Board and the employers. Concrete data as to the results was not obtained.

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Notwithstanding the effort set forth, the Bureau of Labor was not able to include in this Bulletin exact information concerning the strikes in which the Joint Advisory Board intervened.

Up to the present, the law establishing the Bureau of Labor has not been amended in regard to the power and authority of its officials to interfere in all disputes that may arise between employers and employees; and although we regret our impossibility of co-operating with the Joint Advisory Board, it pleases us to know that as long as this body exist the industry will not be so frequently interrupted, and consequently there will be no great losses for either labor or capital.

Separate information in statistical form shall be published showing the industrial situation from July 1, 1917, to May 31 of the present year.

And now, as a simple comment to the series of strikes with disagreeable results for both, employers and employees, we must say:

That it is high time to rectify the methods of inexorability on the part of the employers and of violence on the part of the employees, as a practical and judicious means of obtaining the best solutions for their disputes.

It is the duty of Labor to consider itself the column uplifting Capital, which is the base of its existence.

It is the duty of Capital to manage so that Labor, its inseparable and indispensable brother, may enjoy a part of the benefits of production in the way and proportion that dignity of Life demands in modern civilization.

It shall not be possible to attain a solid and permanent industrial peace to warrant the progress and welfare of both producing factors, without a careful study of the conditions that affect each, and, above all, without putting aside in the struggles between them, anything that may not be distinctly peculiar to both these important factors, especially those affairs of personal character that frequently give a base to industrial disturbances.

The Bureau of Labor is acting on a narrow field of action, and without enough resources to develop its plans; but all should not be left to the official initiative, because this cannot attain the desired success without the discreet and altruist assistance of both factors of production.

Table Showing Strikes from July 1, 1917, to May 31, 1918.

No.	Town	Occupation	Approximate number of strikers	Average salary per day		Results	Remarks
				Before	After		
1	Aguada	Agricultural Workers	50	.70	.70	Failed	Lasted one week.
2	Agua Buenas	Cigarmakers	305				(1)
	id.	Agricultural Workers	60				(1)
3	Arecibo	Tobacco Strippers	37	.60			(1)
	id.	Agricultural Workers	1,000			Failed	(2)
	id.	Tobacco Strippers	75	.375	.50	32½% increase	Intervened by the Bureau.
	id.	Printers	5	.75	.875	20 to 30% increase	Settled directly between employers and strikers.
4	Arroyo	Agricultural Workers	500	.90	1.00	Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers	
5	Barceloneta	id.	300	.90	.90	Failed	
	id.	Factory Workers	200	1.50	1.875	25% increase	
	id.	Locomotive Workers	32	1.50	1.95	30% increase	
6	Bayamón	Tobacco Strippers	67	.40	.50	25% increase	
	id.	Cigarmakers	942	1.75			(1)
	id.	Tobacco Strippers	137	.45			(1)
	id.	Other Tobacco Works	297	.75			(1)
	id. (Cataño)	Tobacco Strippers	225	.40	.45	Salaries increased	Intervened by the Bureau.
	id.	id.	225	.45	.45	Failed	Discharge of a foreman.
7	Caguas	id.	268	.75		Less lbs. in weight	Due to change in quality of tobacco.
	id.	id.	550	.75		Salaries increased	(1)
	id.	id.	82	.75			(1)
	id.	Cigarmakers	80	1.66			(1)
	id.	Factory Workers	70	1.40	1.60	Increase of 20¢	Central Santa Juana.
8	Canóvanas	Agricultural Workers	200	1.00	1.00	Failed	No formal strike.
9	Carollua	id.	400	1.10	1.10	id.	
	id.	Factory Workers	80	1.50	1.50	id.	
10	Cayey	Cigarmakers	265	1.00			(1)
	id.	Tobacco Strippers	18	.60			(1)
	id.	Other Tobacco Works	68				(1)
11	Cidra	Cigarmakers	139				(1)
	id.	Tobacco Strippers	10				(1)
	id.	Other Tobacco Works	46				(1)
12	Coamo	Tobacco Strippers	25				(1)



13	Fajardo.....	2,000	.90	1.37	Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers id.	In addition to salary, 15% bonus.
14	Guayama.....	1,200	.75	.85	id.	
15	Gurabo.....	225			Slight increase.	
	id.	6	.47	.55	15 to 20% increase.	
	Cigarmakers.....	70			Slight increase.	
16	Agricultural Workers.....	500	.95	1.15	20% increase.	Intervened by the Bureau.
17	Humacao.....	80			Unknown.	
18	Juana Diaz.....	108	.45	.45	id.	
19	Juncos.....	180	.45	.45	Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers id.	15% bonus.
	id.	300	.90	1.37	id.	
20	Luquillo.....	200	.90	1.37	id.	In addition to salary, 15% bonus.
21	Mameyes.....	353			id.	(1)
	id.	221			id.	(1)
	Cigarmakers.....	154			id.	(1)
22	Tobacco Strippers.....	115	1.11		Increase of 50¢ and \$1 in several shapes of cigars (Violas)	Salaries equal to those of the P. R. A. T. Co.
	id.	50	.70	.75	Slight increase.	Settled directly between employers and strikers.
	Shoemakers.....	130			40% increase.	No data as to salaries.
23	Tobacco Strippers.....	1,000	1.00	1.37	Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers	
24	Agricultural Workers.....	87	.50	.60	2¢ increase in weight.	
25	Tobacco Strippers.....	600	.95	1.05	Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers	
26	Agricultural Workers.....	30	.65	1.00	56% increase.	
27	Bakers.....	87	.70		id.	
	id.	46	.40		Failed.	Intervened by the Bureau.
	Tobacco Strippers.....	80	.70	.70	35% increase.	(1)
28	Bakers.....	200	1.15	1.50	10% increase.	(1)
	id.	50	1.00	1.10	id.	Lasted 2 or 3 days.
	Shoemakers.....	340	1.10		id.	Intervened by the Bureau.
	Cigarmakers.....	375	.45		id.	(1)
29	Tobacco Strippers.....	25	.80	.80	Failed.	(1)
	id.	500	1.12	1.12	2¢ increase per hour.	
30	Rincon.....	125	1.20	1.36	Petitions granted.	
31	Rio Grande.....	60			Salaries increased to laborers working in place of strikers id.	
	id.	1,297			id.	
	Cigarmakers.....	558	.60		id.	
	Tobacco Strippers.....	1,366			id.	
	Other Tobacco Works.....	155			Material conditions improved. No increase in wages.	
	Motor men and Conductors.....	151	.50	.50	Failed.	
32	Tobacco Strippers.....	85	.50	.60	20% increase.	
	id.	281			id.	(1)
	Cigarmakers.....	95	.50		id.	(1)
	Tobacco Strippers.....	35	.75		id.	(1)
	Other Tobacco Works.....	25			15 to 20% increase.	Intervened by the Bureau.
33	Cigarmakers.....	40	.40	.45	Salaries increased	(1)
	Tobacco Strippers.....					

Table Showing Strikes from July 1, 1917, to May 31, 1918—Continued.

No.	Town	Occupation	Approximate num- ber of strikers	Average salary per day		Results	Remarks
				Before	After		
24	Utunado.....	Cigarmakers.....	100	1.00	.....	.....	(1) Settled directly between em- ployers and strikers.
25	Vega Alta.....	Agricultural Workers.....	600	.95	.95	Failed.....	
26	Vega Baja.....	Id. ....	250	.95	1.00	2% increase.....	

(1)—According to investigations made, we found that conditions in general were improved.

(2)—Strikers returned to their tasks without increase in their salaries or any change as to the conditions in which they worked when the strike was begun.

## APPENDIX.

### LABOR LAWS APPROVED FROM 1916 TO MARCH, 1918.

[No. 17.]

#### AN ACT

TO DETERMINE CERTAIN DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS IN CASE OF STRIKES.

*Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That when any employer or owner of a factory or agricultural estate, or mercantile or industrial establishment of any kind, or any of their agents or representatives, during a general strike of their laborers or employees of any class or during a lockout, advertises in the newspapers, or by means of bills or in any other form, for laborers or employees of any class, or employs agents to solicit or personally solicits persons to work in place of such strikers, he shall state clearly and precisely in all such advertisements, whether written or verbal, the fact that a strike or lockout exists.

Section 2.—That if any person, firm, association or corporation, labor agent or representative violates the provisions of this Act, such person, corporation, firm, association, agent or representative shall be punished by fine not to exceed one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in jail for not more than one hundred days, or by both penalties, in the discretion of the court, for each violation.

Section 3.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 4.—That this Act shall take effect sixty days after its approval.

*Approved, April 12, 1917.*

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[No. 10.]

#### AN ACT

TO DETERMINE THE PROCEDURE IN CASES OF CLAIMS FOR WAGES BY FARM LABORERS AGAINST THEIR EMPLOYERS.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That whenever a farm laborer shall find it necessary to claim from his employer any sum for wages, he may appear before the municipal judge for the municipal judicial district wherein the property on which the work was performed is situated, and file a complaint against the said employer, which complaint shall be filed out by the judge or his secretary, setting forth therein under oath the facts upon which the claim is founded; *Provided, That where the*



property is situated in territory comprised in two or more municipal judicial districts the complaint may be filed in any of the courts in whose district any portion of the property is situated.

Section 2.—That the judge shall fix the date for the hearing of the case which shall be held within ten days from and after the day on which the complaint was filed, and it shall be the duty of the secretary of the court to serve notice on the same day and by mail on the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor of the day so fixed, together with a copy of the complaint, and the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor may intervene in the proceedings through any of the employees under him.

Section 3.—That the marshal shall personally summon the complainant and defendant for the hearing and deliver to each of them a copy of the complaint; *Provided*, That at least three days shall intervene between the date on which the summons is served and the hearing of the case.

Section 4.—That where the defendant is not found or where he has no residence in the municipal judicial district, the summons shall be served on the person who in any manner shall represent the said defendant on the property on which the work originating the claim was performed.

Section 5.—That where the parties shall fail to appear or where the defendant only shall appear, the court shall dismiss the complaint or claim; but where the complainant only appears the hearing shall be held in the absence of the defendant.

Section 6.—Before beginning the introduction of evidence the court shall pass upon all such questions of law as may be submitted to it, but no complaint shall be dismissed for a mere defect as to form.

In the introduction of evidence the widest possible latitude shall be allowed to the parties.

Section 7.—That within twenty-four hours after the hearing the municipal judge shall render judgment, affirming or dismissing the claim. Where the claim is affirmed the defendant shall be adjudged and directed to pay to the complainant such amount of wages as shall have been shown by the evidence; *Provided*, That the said municipal judge, if malice on the part of the defendant is shown, shall adjudge him to pay to the complainant by way of indemnity or punishment an additional sum of not to exceed fifty (50) dollars.

Section 8.—That any of the parties who may believe himself prejudiced by the judgment may take an appeal to the district court for the judicial district in which the municipal trial court is situate.

The appeal shall be taken by filing with the secretary of the municipal court within two days after the rendition of judgment a notice setting forth the intention of appealing and by delivering a copy of the said notice to the opposing party or to his representative or attorney.

Section 9.—That within five days from and after the date on which the notice of appeal was filed, the secretary shall transmit to the district court a copy of the complaint, of the judgment, and of all orders which the aggrieved party desires to submit to the said district court for the revision thereof.

Section 10.—That upon receipt of the said proceedings by the secretary of the district court, he shall report the same to the judge who shall fix, irrespective of the calendar, a day for the hearing, within the first ten days after receipt of

said proceedings and notice thereof shall be transmitted by mail to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor and by the marshal to the interested parties; *Provided*, That the marshal of the district court may entrust the service of such notice to the marshal of the municipal court for the district in which the persons to be served shall reside.

Section 11.—That in the hearing on appeal the trial shall be held *de novo*; and where the appellant shall be the defendant and the court, after the introduction of the evidence, shall be satisfied that the said appeal was taken only for the purpose of delaying a compliance with the judgment, it shall have power to adjudge and direct the said defendant to pay to the complainant by way of indemnity or as a punishment a sum of not to exceed one hundred (100) dollars.

Section 12.—That in no case of a claim for farm wages shall more than one appeal be allowed.

Section 13.—That the judgment affirming a claim shall direct payment to be made within five days from and after the date on which the said judgment becomes final. Upon the expiration of this term said judgment may be executed on any property of the defendant through an order of execution which shall be issued by the secretary on petition of the complainant, and which shall be executed by the marshal within a term of not to exceed twenty (20) days from and after the date on which the said order of execution was delivered to him.

Section 14.—That no costs shall accrue in this class of suits.

Section 15.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith, are hereby repealed.

Section 16.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, November 14, 1917.*

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[No. 12.]

AN ACT

TO AMEND SECTIONS 1487, 1488, 1489 AND 1490 OF THE REVISED CIVIL CODE OF PORTO RICO.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That sections 1487, 1488, 1489 and 1490 of the Revised Civil Code of Porto Rico are hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 1487.—A person employed for domestic service, whether for the personal service of the head of the family or for the general service of the household, whose service contract is for a specified time, may leave such service or be dismissed before the expiration of the terms of the contract; but if the employer dismisses the employee subject to these conditions without sufficient cause, he shall indemnify said employee by paying him the wages due and those for fifteen additional days.

“Section 1488.—In addition to the provisions of the foregoing sections in regard to contracts between employers and employees, the provisions of special laws and regulations shall be observed.

"Section 1489.—Field hands, mechanics, artisans and other laborers hired for a certain time or for a certain work cannot leave nor be dismissed without sufficient cause before the contract is completed.

"Section 1490.—The dismissal of field hands, mechanics, artisans and other hired laborers to which the preceding sections refer gives the right to dispossess them of all tools and buildings which they may occupy under the contract."

Section 2.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, November 14, 1917.*

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[No. 26.]

AN ACT

TO AMEND SECTION 553 OF THE PENAL CODE, REPEAL SECTION 554 OF SAID CODE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That section 553 of the Penal Code, as amended August 9, 1913, and March 28, 1914, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 553.—That all day Sunday; from 12 o'clock noon on legal holidays, except Labor Day, that is, the first Monday in September, and the Fourth of July, when they shall remain closed all day; from 9 p. m. every Saturday; from 6 p. m. every working day; and from 10 p. m. on December 24 and 31 and January 5 of each year, commercial and industrial establishments shall remain closed to the public and suspend all work for employees one hour after closing, except the following:

"I. Libraries, sugar and alcohol factories, coffee-cleaning mills, and pharmacies only so far as relates to the dispatch of prescriptions and medicines at retail.

"II. Public markets, printeries, garages and bakeries; *Provided*, That no establishment in public market places for the sale of provisions and merchandise shall be exempt from compliance with this Act.

"III. Establishments where coffee and refreshments only are sold; restaurants, hotels, inns, eating houses, places where meals are served, confectionery and pastry stores.

"IV. Casinos, billiard rooms, ice depots, meat stands, milk stalls, and stands where sweets, matches, manufactured tobacco and periodicals are sold.

"V. Slaughterhouses, dairies, livery stables, piers or docks and undertaking establishments.

"VI. Public and quasi-public utilities and works of emergency necessary to prevent danger or considerable financial loss.

"VII. Theaters, or other places devoted exclusively to amusements or charitable purposes, shall not be comprised under the provisions of this section so far as relates to the purposes stated herein."



Section 2.—That section 554 of the Penal Code in force is hereby repealed.

Section 3.—That employees and clerks of enterprises and establishments not exempted by this Act, and who render services on the basis of an annual, monthly or weekly salaries, or in any form other than for wages or piece work at a fixed price, shall be entitled to one day of rest for every six days of work, at full salary.

Section 4.—That all violations of this Act shall be punished by a maximum fine of one hundred dollars for the first offense, or by imprisonment for a maximum term of thirty days, and subsequent violations shall be punished by a fine of from twenty to one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment from five to thirty days, or by both penalties in the discretion of the court.

Section 5.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith, are hereby repealed.

Section 6.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, November 23, 1917.*

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[No. 28.]

#### AN ACT

TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUING OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING HOUSES FOR ARTISANS AND LABORERS, PROVIDE FOR THE LEASING OF THE SAME, WITH A CERTAIN RIGHT TO THE OWNERSHIP THEREOF, IMPROVE THE SANITARY CONDITIONS OF CERTAIN LANDS OF THE PEOPLE OF PORTO RICO, PROMOTE THE CREATION OF FARMS TO BE LEASED TO FARM LABORERS AND TO GRANT THEM TITLE THERETO, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That the Commissioner of the Interior is hereby directed to build houses in any municipality of Porto Rico upon lands of The People of Porto Rico to be selected for such purpose by the Commissioner of the Interior and the Commissioner of Health, in order to furnish adequate habitations to artisans, laborers and other working men at a reasonable cost.

Section 2.—That such houses shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the sanitary laws, rules and regulations, now or hereafter in force, and they shall be rented, operated and maintained in accordance with rules and regulations, not in conflict with this Act, adopted by the Homestead Commission created by an act of the Legislative Assembly of Porto Rico entitled "An Act providing for the sale to laborers of certain lands of The People of Porto Rico, and for other purposes," approved March 11, 1915. The said Commission shall consist of the Commissioner of the Interior, who shall be *ex-officio* chairman thereof, the Treasurer, the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor, and three persons of good reputation who shall be designated by the Governor with the consent of the Senate; *Provided*, That the two principal political parties and the laborer organizations of Porto Rico shall be represented in the said Commission.

Section 3.—That in order to provide the necessary funds in an amount not to exceed two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) dollars for the works and

improvements herein authorized, the Treasurer of Porto Rico is hereby authorized, directed and empowered to issue bonds of The People of Porto Rico to the amount of two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) dollars in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Act.

The Commission shall fairly distribute in the Island the funds appropriated for this purpose, proportionately to the number of laborers; *Provided*, That such houses may be constructed on lands donated by municipalities or private individuals to The People of Porto Rico to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Section 4.—That the said bonds may be coupon or registered bonds, or both, and the coupon bonds may be made exchangeable for registered bonds, under such regulations as may be prescribed. The bonds may be in any or all of the following denominations: One thousand (1,000) dollars; five thousand (5,000) dollars; ten thousand (10,000) dollars; and they shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed four and one-half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) per cent per annum, which interest shall be payable on the first day of January and July. The bonds shall be divided for payment into series of fifty thousand (50,000) dollars or any multiple thereof; the series shall be indicated by a serial letter on each bond; they shall mature in the order of their issuance and shall be redeemable on any interest-payment date after ten years from the date of issue thereof, after sixty day's printed notice published in one or more newspapers in the city of New York and one or more newspapers in the Island of Porto Rico, at least once each week during said sixty days; and payable twenty-five years after the date of issue thereof. Both principal and interest shall be payable either at the Treasury of the United States, at the office of the Treasurer of Porto Rico, or at the office of such fiscal agent of the Government of Porto Rico as the Treasurer of Porto Rico may determine, in gold coin of the United States of the present standard of weight and fineness.

Section 5.—That the said bonds shall be sold by the Treasurer of Porto Rico or by any fiscal agent appointed by him for that purpose with the approval of the Governor, upon such terms as may be most favorable to The People of Porto Rico and as near to the dates of their issuance as is practicable. The proceeds from their sale shall be deposited with the authorized depository of the Government of Porto Rico to be designated by the Treasurer of Porto Rico. That the said Treasurer of Porto Rico shall have, subject to the approval of the Governor, entire charge and authority within the limitations herein prescribed, in respect to all matters relating to the said bonds, including the terms and denominations thereof, the manner, time and method of the issue and sale thereof. Subject to the limitations hereinbefore provided, he shall take all action necessary for the complete carrying out of the provisions of this Act, and he may provide for the issuance, pending the preparation of definitive bonds, of interim bonds or interim certificates therefor, provided that such bonds shall be countersigned by the Governor of Porto Rico.

Section 6.—That for the payment of the interest on the said bonds, as it falls due, and the repayment of the principal, the good faith of The People of Porto Rico is hereby irrevocably pledged.

Section 7.—That the Treasurer of Porto Rico is hereby directed, authorized and empowered to pay the interest on said bonds as it falls due and the principal on said bonds as they mature, out of any revenues coming into the Insular Treasury and available for expenditure, including revenues accruing under the

provisions of this Act, and other revenues collected in excess of expenditures required by law.

Section 8.—That the foregoing provisions regarding the payment of the interest on said bonds and the repayment of the principal shall be deemed to be in the nature of a continuous appropriation and be sufficient authority for the Treasury of Porto Rico to make such payments, and no further appropriations for the purpose shall be required. Such payments, however, shall be made by the Treasurer of Porto Rico in accordance with the law governing the disbursement of public moneys.

Section 9.—That all moneys received as rental or other income from the said houses shall be handled by the Treasurer of Porto Rico and shall constitute a special fund in the Treasury of Porto Rico, which moneys are hereby appropriated for expenditure under the direction of the Homestead Commission for the payment of expenses of reports and maintenance of the said houses; *Provided*, That the net receipts from such rentals or other income, after the payments herein authorized have been made, at the end of each quarter, upon the first day of March, June, September and December, shall be carried to the credit of a sinking fund for the purpose of paying the interest and principal of the bond issue authorized by this Act until such time as the principal and interest of the bonds provided for herein shall have been paid.

Section 10.—That the report of the Treasurer of Porto Rico to the Auditor, of the amount of said bonds so issued and sold by him, together with the numbers and denominations, and the amount realized upon such sale or sales thereof, shall be made a matter of record in the office of the Auditor and of the Treasurer of Porto Rico.

Section 11.—That the bonds herein authorized to be issued and the obligations thereby created, shall not be impaired by any act or resolution of the Legislative Assembly or of the Legislature of Porto Rico, subsequently approved, or by any interpretation thereof, or by any act or resolution heretofore approved; but the said bonds, when duly issued and sold, shall constitute a legal and binding obligation of "The People of Porto Rico until duly redeemed and paid.

Section 12.—That the rental to be charged for houses built under the provisions of this Act shall be fixed by the Homestead Commission. And likewise the price at which the lessee may acquire ownership of the leased house and lot. In determining the rental and the selling price, the Homestead Commission shall take into consideration the following:

The value of the land occupied by said houses.

The cost of building said houses.

Repairs, insurance and other necessary and proper administrative expenses; *Provided*, That such amount as shall have been paid as rental shall be applied, first, to the payment of interest on the amount fixed as the selling price, at a rate of not to exceed six (6) per cent, and the remainder shall be applied to the payment of said price, and title to the property shall be transferred to the lessee, his heirs or successors when the said price of said sale shall have been paid in full.

Section 13.—That in order to defray the expenses that may be incurred in the issuance and sale of the bonds, there is hereby appropriated, from any funds in the Insular Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the amount of five thousand



(5,000) dollars or so much thereof as may be necessary to be reimbursed to the Insular Treasury out of the proceeds of the bonds herein authorized to be sold.

Section 14.—That the Commissioner of the Interior is hereby authorized to provide for the survey, drainage, filling, laying out into streets and paving or macadamizing, where any or all of such improvements are necessary, of lands of The People of Porto Rico, and to make such other improvements on such lands as may be necessary or advisable to place said lands in proper sanitary condition for habitation.

Section 15.—That the Commissioner of the Interior, in accord with the Homestead Commission, is hereby authorized to lease and sell lots of land belonging to The People of Porto Rico improved in accordance with the preceding section, as hereinafter provided. Public lands situated in or near towns may be leased or sold to workmen for dwelling purposes only; public lands situated in rural sections may be leased and sold to farm laborers either for dwelling purposes or for dwelling and farming purposes, pursuant to the Homestead Act, approved March 11, 1915.

Section 16.—That the lots of land to be leased for dwelling purposes with a certain right to the ownership thereof in accordance herewith shall be of such area as the Commissioner of the Interior may determine, but not to exceed 500 square meters. Lots of land to be leased for dwelling and farming purposes in accordance herewith shall be of such area as the Commissioner of the Interior and the Homestead Commission may determine, but not to exceed two hectares.

Section 17.—That after any particular tract of land shall have been improved, as provided in section fourteen of this Act, and divided into lots or small farms, the Commissioner of the Interior, in accord with the Homestead Commission, shall publish a description of said lots or small farms at least three times in two newspapers of general circulation in Porto Rico. Such public notice shall also state briefly the conditions under which applications for the lease of said lots or small farms are to be made, with a right to the ownership thereof.

Section 18.—That no application for the lease of lands with a right to the ownership thereof under this Act shall be received unless the person making the same is (1) a citizen of the United States; (2) one whose annual income does not exceed one thousand (1,000) dollars; (3) of good moral character; and (4) without other property in Porto Rico or elsewhere, the value of which exceeds three hundred dollars; *Provided*, That where dwellings are erected upon any lands which are to be leased, with a right to the ownership thereof, the person actually living in them, if without property in Porto Rico or elsewhere, the value of which exceeds five hundred dollars, shall be given priority over all other persons in obtaining such leases and ownerships.

Section 19.—That after a tract of land has been advertised, as herein provided, any person who can qualify as an applicant, in accordance with the provisions of section eighteen of this Act, may make an application for the lease of a lot or for a small farm with a right to the ownership thereof, in the said advertised tract of land. All applications shall be made in writing, and shall be filed with the Commissioner of the Interior, and shall state the applicant's first and subsequent choices of the lots or farms advertised. Persons making application shall give to the Commissioner of the Interior all the information required by the Homestead Commission.

Section 20.—That persons applying for the lease of lots of land for dwelling purposes or for dwelling and farm purposes with a right to the ownership thereof shall be enrolled in registries kept by the Homestead Commission, in the order of priority of the filing of application.

Section 21.—That the Commissioner of the Interior shall make such inquiries and investigations regarding the worthiness of the various applicants, and the correctness of the information contained in their application as he may deem necessary. After this information has been obtained, the Homestead Commission, created by an act of the Legislative Assembly of Porto Rico entitled "An Act providing for the sale to laborers of certain lands of The People of Porto Rico and for other purposes," approved March 11, 1915, shall apportion the lots or small farms with a right to the ownership thereof to the most worthy applicants, due regard being had of all of the provisions of this Act, under such rules and regulations and procedure as it may deem proper. In the assignment of lots preference shall be given, other things being equal, (1) to persons actually living upon them, as hereinbefore provided; (2) to persons who have been residents for one year or more, previous to the date of the advertisement of said tract of land, of the municipality in which such lands are located, and in the assignment of small farms preference shall be given to those having the best records for industry and to those having the best knowledge of practical farming; and (3) choice of lots or small farms available for lots shall be granted in the order of priority of the filing of applications.

Section 22.—That persons leasing lots with a right of ownership under the provisions of this Act may, with the approval of the Homestead Commission assign their leases and ownership to other persons who are qualified under the Act to lease or purchase such lots, or they may release their leases and ownership to The People of Porto Rico under such conditions as the Homestead Commission may determine by rules and regulations.

Section 23.—That the Commissioner of the Interior, in accord with the Homestead Commission, is hereby authorized to contract with the persons actually occupying dwellings erected on lands of The People of Porto Rico to remove said dwellings, and the Homestead Commission may, in consideration for such removal, transfer all right and title of The People of Porto Rico in said dwellings to the persons removing them; *Provided*, That the title to the said dwellings shall not be transferred to any person other than the persons actually occupying them. The Commissioner of the Interior, in accord with the Homestead Commission, is hereby authorized to permit persons removing their dwellings and obtaining title thereto, as provided in this section, to lease with the right of ownership other lots of The People of Porto Rico available for that purpose and to place such dwellings thereon upon compliance with the conditions herein specified, for the lease of lots of lands belonging to The People of Porto Rico.

Section 24.—That it is hereby expressly declared that the purposes for which lands of The People of Porto Rico are to be used, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, are public purposes.

Section 25.—That whenever in this Act rules and regulations are to be adopted by the Homestead Commission, such rules and regulations may be repealed and amended; or new rules and regulations adopted from time to time in the discretion of said Homestead Commission.

Section 26.—That whenever the word “person” is used in this Act, it shall be interpreted to include workingman, head of a family, and the plural forms of the same when applicable. The word “dwelling,” as used in this Act shall include structure, house, habitation, inclosure and building, and the plural form of the same when applicable.

Section 27.—That any person knowingly hereafter erecting any dwelling upon lands belonging to The People of Porto Rico, otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of this law, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a penalty of not less than ten (10) dollars, nor more than fifty (50) dollars, or by imprisonment for not less than five days nor more than thirty days, or by both such fine and imprisonment. Any person who, after this law goes into effect, knowingly rents or leases for profit any dwelling erected upon lands of The People of Porto Rico, except as permitted by law, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than fifty (50) dollars or by imprisonment of not less than thirty days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Section 28.—That the sum of twenty thousand (20,000) dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the Insular Treasury, not appropriated for other purposes, in order to carry out the provisions of this Act, which said sum shall be reimbursed to the Insular Treasury out of the proceeds of the sale of bonds authorized by this Act.

Section 29.—That an Act entitled “An Act providing for the sale to laborers of certain lands of The People of Porto Rico, and for other purposes,” approved March 11, 1915, where not in conflict herewith, shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 30.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 31.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after approval.

*Approved, November 27, 1917.*

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[No. 41.]

#### AN ACT

TO PROVIDE FOR A DISPENSARY AND MINOR SURGEON IN SUGAR FACTORIES, FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, ELECTRIC AND HYDRAULIC PLANTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That every owner of a sugar factory, factory, workshop, electric or hydraulic plant or building plant operating power-driven machinery outside of the urban zone, whose employees shall exceed fifty (50) in number, be and the same are hereby obligated to provide a dispensary with a sufficient stock of medicines adequate for cases of accident.

Section 2.—The dispensary referred to in section 1 hereof shall be established in a proper room with sanitary conditions and of sufficient light and supplied with water, telephone, operating table and other appurtenances thereunto belonging, so that it may be used for giving first aid in cases of accidents; *Provided*, That in any accident occurring in the places mentioned in section 1 hereof,



the physician or minor surgeon shall be furnished with such supplies as it may be necessary to use.

Section 3.—That it shall be the duty of every owner of a sugar factory, factory, workshop, electric, hydraulic or building plant operating power-driven machinery, whose employees shall exceed fifty (50) in number, to contract for the services of a physician and a minor surgeon or a nurse for the care of traumatic accidents occurring during the year.

Section 4.—That minor surgeons under contract by virtue hereof shall be duly licensed to practice their profession and shall be provided with such instruments as may be indispensable.

Section 5.—That the Commissioner of Health shall be in charge of the enforcement of this Act and shall visit and inspect said dispensaries either personally or through his inspectors or other employees, to satisfy himself that said dispensaries are properly supplied with all the material necessary for the purposes for which they are intended.

Section 6.—That any violation of this Act shall be punished by fine, not to exceed five hundred (500) dollars or by imprisonment in jail for not to exceed six (6) months.

Section 7.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 8.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, November 30, 1917.*

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[No. 42.]

## AN ACT

### TO PROTECT LABORERS IN THEIR RIGHT TO BE MEMBERS OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That it shall be unlawful for any corporation, company, partnership, association, individual or any employer of laborers to require that the person or persons so employed, as a condition precedent to obtaining work or to continue working, or to the execution of any contract, agreement or covenant, evidenced in writing or otherwise, or by reserve conditions, shall sever their connections or abstain from belonging to any legal organization or society; or under any pretext whatever to prohibit, limit or restrict said employees in the exercise of their social, economical, fraternal or commercial rights in connection with or through any legal organization or society during their employment by any employer.

Section 2.—That any contract, agreement, covenant or reserve condition of the aforesaid nature shall constitute *prima facie* evidence of the violation of this Act.

Section 3.—That any corporation, company, partnership, association, individual or employer of laborers, violating any of the provisions of this Act shall be deemed guilty of misdemeanor and upon conviction of any person or persons under the provisions of this Act they shall be punished by a fine of not less than fifty (50) dollars nor more than five hundred (500) dollars for each and every

such violation, or by imprisonment for not less than ninety days, nor more than six months in the jail of the district where the violation shall have been committed, or by both penalties, fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

Section 4.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 5.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, November 30, 1917.*

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[No. 46.]

TO AMEND AN ACT ENTITLED "AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCAFFOLDS, THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES," APPROVED MARCH 13, 1913.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That section 1 of an act entitled "An Act to provide for the construction of scaffolds, the protection of the public, and for other purposes," approved March 13, 1913, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 1.—That all scaffolds, elevators, hoists, platforms, scales or ladders, or any other mechanical appliance whether portable or fixed, placed or constructed by any person, firm or corporation in this Island for the purposes of building, repairing, altering, destroying or painting any house, building, bridge, viaduct or other construction, shall be constructed in a secure, appropriate and convenient manner, and so placed when in operation as to offer proper and adequate protection to the life and limbs of the person or persons working thereon or passing thereunder, and in such manner as to prevent the falling to the ground of any materials or utensils placed thereon. All scaffolds, platforms or other similar appliances shall be, if possible, at least two feet wide and shall have a safety partition and railing, forming a close rectangle, which shall be thirty-six inches in height from the floor or surface of said scaffolds or platforms, and shall extend the full length thereof and be solidly constructed, and firm and secure enough to prevent its giving way from the building or construction. The Chief of the Bureau of Labor, or his representatives are hereby authorized to stop any work where the above provisions are being violated, and to require such changes and modifications as may be necessary for the protection of the life or limbs of the persons employed in said places before the work may continue.

Section 2.—That any person, or the administrator, superintendent, foreman, overseer, or representative thereof, violating this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five (25) dollars, or by imprisonment in jail for a maximum term of sixty days.

Section 3.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 4.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, December 1, 1917.*

[No. 3.]

## AN ACT

TO AMEND SECTION 3 OF "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 553 OF THE PENAL CODE, REPEAL SECTION 554 OF THE SAID CODE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES," APPROVED NOVEMBER 23, 1917.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That section 3 of "An Act to amend section 553 of the Penal Code, repeal section 554 of said code, and for other purposes," approved November 23, 1917, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 3.—That employees and clerks of enterprises and establishments exempted by this Act, and who render services on the basis of an annual, monthly or weekly salary, or in any form other than for wages or piece work at a fixed price, shall be entitled to one day of rest for every six days of work, at full salary."

Section 2.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, February 18, 1918.*

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[No. 6.]

## AN ACT

TO EXTEND THE TIME FOR THE TAKING EFFECT OF ACT No. 14, OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PORTO RICO, APPROVED APRIL 12, 1917.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

Section 1.—That section 4 of Act No. 14, entitled "An Act regulating the load or weight that laborers may carry, and for other purposes," approved April 12, 1917, be amended to read as follows:

"Section 4.—That this Act shall take effect January 1, 1920."

Section 2.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, February 21, 1918.*

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[No. 10.]

## AN ACT

TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF THE INHABITANTS OF PORTO RICO IN REGARD TO ACCIDENTS CAUSING DEATH OR INJURIES TO WORKMEN WHILE ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK; ESTABLISHING THE DUTY OF EMPLOYERS TO COMPENSATE THEIR EMPLOYEES OR HEIRS, AS DEFINED IN THIS ACT, FOR INJURIES OR DEATH IRRESPECTIVE OF NEGLIGENCE, AND TO PROVIDE WAYS AND MEANS FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS DUTY; CREATING AN INSURANCE FUND TO SECURE EMPLOYERS AGAINST SUCH LIABILITY AND PROVIDING FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION OF



SUCH INSURANCE; CREATING A WORKMEN'S RELIEF COMMISSION AND DETERMINING ITS POWERS AND DUTIES; ESTABLISHING THE LIABILITY OF THE PEOPLE OF PORTO RICO WITH REGARD TO THEIR LABORERS FOR INJURIES OR DEATH OF SUCH LABORERS IN WORKS PERFORMED BY ADMINISTRATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:*

#### SHORT TITLE.

Section 1.—This Act shall be known as the Workmen's Accident Compensation Act.

#### EMPLOYMENTS COVERED.

Section 2.—That the provisions of this Act shall apply to laborers injured, disabled or killed by accidents occurring while engaged in their work. Farm laborers not employed to work with machinery operated by steam, gas, electricity, animal or other mechanical power, domestic servants and employees engaged in clerical work, in offices and commercial establishments where machinery is not used, are excepted; *Provided, however,* That farm laborers employed in agricultural work where animal power is used shall be entitled to the benefits of this Act.

This Act shall not apply to any employer who regularly employs less than three laborers, or to any laborer whose wages exceed the sum of twelve hundred (1,200) dollars annually; *Provided,* That pursuant to the provisions of this Act, compensation shall be paid to laborers injured, disabled or killed by accidents caused by the employment and occurring while engaged in any public works that may be performed by administration.

The Workmen's Relief Commission is hereby authorized and directed to pay such compensation pursuant to the terms of this Act, drawing from the Trust Fund belonging to the Government such sum or sums as may be necessary for the payment of said compensation. The sums so paid need not be reimbursed to The People of Porto Rico out of the fund created by this Act.

#### RIGHTS OF LABORERS.

Section 3.—That any laborer who may be injured within the provisions of this Act shall be entitled to—

1. Medical attendance, medicines and sustenance as may be prescribed, including hospital service when necessary.

2. If the injury be of a temporary nature, to compensation equal to one-half of the wages received by him the day of the accident, which compensation shall run during such time as it may take to effect a cure. The period of such payments shall in no case exceed one hundred and four weeks; *Provided,* That in no case shall there be paid more than seven (7) nor less than three (3) dollars per week.

3. If the laborer is partially disabled for permanent work he shall receive a compensation of thirteen hundred (1,300) dollars<sup>1</sup> as minimum and twenty-five hundred (2,500) dollars as maximum. Compensation shall be graded in proportion to the rate of wages that the laborer was earning.

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish text reads: "trescientos (300) dólares" (three hundred [300] dollars).

Any permanent injury which does not constitute permanent total disability, such as the loss of an eye, a hand, a foot, or any other injury of a permanent nature which does not wholly disable a laborer for any work in a remunerative occupation, shall be considered as partial permanent disability.

4. If the laborer is totally disabled for work, he shall receive a compensation of two thousand (2,000) dollars as minimum and four thousand (4,000) dollars as maximum. The compensation shall be graded in proportion to the rate of wages that the laborer was earning.

The preceding compensations shall be fixed between the maximum and minimum in view of the earning capacity of the injured laborer and his probabilities of life.

The total and permanent loss of sight of both eyes; the loss of both feet at or above the ankle; the loss of both hands at or above the wrist; the loss of one hand and one foot, and such injuries as may result in the permanent disability of the laborer for any work in a remunerative occupation shall be considered total disability.

5. If the laborer loses his life as a result of the injuries sustained, death occurring within one year from the time of the accident, as a consequence of such accident, the widower or widow and legitimate children and grandchildren, and, in the proper case, the illegitimate children and grandchildren, be they natural or not, of the deceased laborer all of whom were dependent exclusively on his earnings for their support, and, in default thereof, the parents of the deceased laborer who were dependent exclusively on his or her earnings for their support, and if there be no such parents, the nearest relative who was also exclusively dependent on the earnings of the decedent, shall receive a compensation of three to four thousand dollars as a maximum, which shall be graded according to the earning capacity of the laborer and of the number of persons entitled to compensation; *Provided, however,* That compensation where more than two persons are equally entitled thereto, as hereinbefore provided, shall be apportioned in the proper proportion, in accordance with the Civil Code; *Provided, further,* That an illegitimate child of a deceased laborer which child is not a natural child, shall have a share in the compensation equal to one-half of that accruing to an acknowledged natural child.

The laborer may, under will and testament, determine the apportionment to be made of the compensation so as not to be in conflict with this Act or with the Civil Code.

In cases coming under paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, where a sum of money is to be paid to the laborer or to his heirs as compensation, pursuant to this Act, the Workmen's Relief Commission hereinafter created shall exercise its good offices by reasonable suggestions so that the sum received shall be invested in a manner advantageous to the welfare of the laborer and his relatives, in such form as to produce the best possible means of subsistence; *Provided,* That no allowance for medicine and food shall be made after the date of the granting of such compensation and sums advanced therefor shall be deducted from the said compensation; *Provided further,* That if the laborer or his heirs, pursuant to this Act, are minors or incapacitated persons, or if, in the judgment of the said commission, there is a reasonable risk that such cash compensation may be squandered, the said commission shall deliver the amount of such compensation to

the district court of the district where the beneficiary resides, for custody and investment in accordance with the provisions of the law regulating the application of amounts derived from the sale of the property of minors.

#### EXCEPTED CASES OF ACCIDENTS.

Section 4.—Accidents occurring under the following circumstances are not labor accidents and, therefore, shall not entitle the laborer or his heirs under this Act, to compensation:

1. When the laborer attempts to commit a crime, or to injure his employer or any other person, or when he voluntarily causes himself injury.
2. When the laborer is intoxicated, provided such intoxication is the cause of the accident.
3. When the injury is caused to the laborer by the criminal act of a third person.
4. When gross negligence of the laborer is the sole cause of the injury.

#### MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

Section 5.—During the period of disability the injured workman shall submit himself for examination, at reasonable times and places, by a competent physician or surgeon, designated by the commission hereinafter created. The commission is hereby authorized to enter into contracts with insular, municipal and private physicians and with hospitals and *practicantes* when deemed advisable by it.

The workman and the employer shall also be entitled to designate and pay a physician and surgeon to witness such examination, but this right is established without prejudice to the right of the physician designated as aforesaid to visit the injured workman at all reasonable times and under all reasonable circumstances during his disability.

The refusal or objection of a workman, without just cause, to submit himself to such medical examination or professional treatment shall deprive him of his right to receive compensation, under this Act or to institute or prosecute proceedings under this Act for the recovery of such compensation.

#### WORKMEN'S RELIEF COMMISSION.

Section 6.—That a commission to be known as "The Workmen's Relief Commission" is hereby created, which shall consist of five members, as follows:

The Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor, who shall be chairman of the commission;

The Treasurer of Porto Rico;

And three other commissioners who shall be appointed by the Governor of Porto Rico, with the approval of the Senate, and one of whom, at least, shall be a person affiliated with one of the bona fide labor organizations, another of whom shall be a physician and the other an engineer, until the next general elections are held. At the next general elections and in each subsequent election there shall be elected three commissioners of the Workmen's Relief Commission and a candidate shall be nominated by each of the three political parties casting the highest number of votes at the previous elections.



Such commissioners as may not be employees of the Insular Government shall receive a per diem of seven (7) dollars each for attending each regular or special meeting of the commission, payable out of the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund; and, further, mileage from their places of residence to the place of meeting and return, at the date of ten (10) cents per mile. In no case shall the amount for per diem for each commissioner exceed the sum of four hundred (400) dollars per annum. The said commission shall elect a secretary prior to the first day of June. The said commission shall have power to adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act not inconsistent therewith, which said rules and regulations shall have the force of law. Violation of any rule or regulation issued by the commission created by this Act shall be deemed a misdemeanor punishable by fine of not to exceed fifty (50) dollars for each violation.

#### REPORT OF ACCIDENTS BY EMPLOYERS.

Section 7.—Every employer subject to the provisions of this Act, or the person representing him in business, shall report to the Workmen's Relief Commission as soon as possible, within a period of five days from the date of the accident, all injuries suffered by his employees in the course of their employment. Such reports shall be upon printed blanks furnished upon request by the commission, and shall contain the name and nature of the business of the employer, the location of the establishment or place of business, the name, age, sex and occupation of each injured employee, and shall state the date and hour of the accident, the nature and cause of the injuries sustained and such other information as may be required by the Workmen's Relief Commission.

The report made by the employer under the provisions of this section shall not be evidence against the employer in any proceeding under this or any other Act.

The refusal or neglect of any employer to make the report required by this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five (25) nor more than (50) dollars for each offense.

The Department of Agriculture and Labor, within forty-eight hours after receipt of notice from the commission of the occurrence of an accident to any workman subject to the provisions of this Act, shall make a thorough investigation of the said accident, the cause or causes thereof, the character, nature and extent of the injuries sustained, and shall file a full report of the said facts with the Workmen's Relief Commission, including in the said report such other facts and circumstances as in the opinion of the Workmen's Relief Commission shall enable it to pass judgment on the claim for the relief of the injured workman when the said claim shall be presented to the commission as herein provided.

The Workmen's Relief Commission shall have the power to make such further investigation as it may deem necessary for the purposes of this Act.

The Workmen's Relief Commission, or some trustworthy person designated by said commission, is hereby expressly authorized to subpoena witnesses, under notice of punishment for contempt, to take oaths and declarations, to examine books and documentary evidence material to the case under investigation, and to visit and inspect the buildings, machinery and other property where any accident to a workman may have occurred.

## APPLICATIONS FOR COMPENSATION.

Section 8.—That from and after the approval of this Act, any workman subject to this Act who has sustained injuries while engaged in his work and in case of the death of such workman as the result of said injuries, his legal heirs, as described in paragraph 5, section 3, of this Act, dependent exclusively upon his wages for support, may present to the Workmen's Relief Commission, within ninety days counted from the date of the injuries or from the date of the death of the workman, as the case may be, an application in writing for the compensation provided for in this Act; *Provided*, That when the ninety days allowed for filing the application shall have elapsed such application not having been made, it shall be the duty of the Workmen's Relief Commission to investigate the reason why the person concerned did not make such application and when the commission deems that said application was not made because of ignorance of the party concerned or because of some other reason not under the control of such party concerned, said party shall be granted thirty days more; *And provided, further*, That no application shall be denied on account of prescription unless it is clearly shown that said party concerned was notified of his right.

Such application shall state the date, place, nature and cause of the injury or death, the name and address of the employer and the name and address of the injured workman.

Within the period of fifteen days after the receipt of the report of the Department of Agriculture and Labor, provided for in the foregoing section, the Workmen's Relief Commission shall consider the petition for compensation and shall render a decision either denying or awarding the compensation applied for; and in case the commission is of the opinion that the petitioner is entitled to compensation the decision of the commission shall specify the amount to be paid, and the time and manner in which payment shall be made.

A certified copy of the decision of the Workmen's Relief Commission, denying or granting compensation under the provisions of this Act, shall be served upon the applicant for compensation and upon the employer for whom the injured workman was working at the time of the accident, within ten days after the rendering of such decision.

A certified copy of the decision of the commission, signed by the president and secretary thereof, and sealed with such seal as the commission may adopt, shall be sufficient authority for the Auditor of Porto Rico, in accordance with this Act, to issue a warrant to be paid by the Treasurer of Porto Rico out of the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund.

No claim for the compensation provided for in this Act shall be considered by the Workmen's Relief Commission unless the commission has received a written application on behalf of the person or persons entitled to compensation, within ninety days from the date of the accident.

## APPEALS.

Section 9.—Appeals from the decision of the Workmen's Relief Commission to the district court of the district where the accident occurred shall be allowed to the claimant only when the commission shall have decided that no accident has occurred for which compensation is provided in this Act.

Appeals from the decision of the Workmen's Relief Commission shall likewise be allowed to any employer who has been assessed for premiums under the provisions of this Act only when the decisions of the Workmen's Relief Commission are to the effect that the accidents are such for which compensation should be allowed under the provisions of this Act.

Such appeal must be taken by filing with the secretary of the district court a written petition setting forth the facts upon which the appeal is based and serving a copy thereof upon the Workmen's Relief Commission within thirty days after receipt of notice of the decision of the Workmen's Relief Commission.

After the appeal is perfected the district court shall proceed with the case in the same manner as provided by law for an appeal from a judgment of a municipal court in civil cases. The decision of the district court shall be final on questions of fact.

#### GROUPING OF OCCUPATIONS.

Section 10.—Before June 1, 1918, and before June 1 of each following year, the Workmen's Relief Commission shall classify and group the occupations of workmen to whom this Act applies in accordance with the probable risk or liability of injury under existing conditions and shall fix rates of insurance to be paid by the employers of workmen in these groups. All such rates or premiums shall be levied on the estimated payroll of the employer of such workmen for the fiscal year covered by the insurance, on a basis that shall be fair, equitable and just as among such employers. Where the Workmen's Relief Commission is of the opinion that the payroll for the fiscal year prior to the year for which insurance is to be collected constitutes a fair basis upon which to estimate the payroll for the fiscal year during which the insurance is to be effective, the said payroll for the fiscal year during which the insurance is to be effective shall be estimated thereby; *Provided*, That when, in the opinion of the Workmen's Relief Commission, such payroll cannot be taken as a fair basis upon which to estimate the payroll for the year during which the insurance is to be effective, the Workmen's Relief Commission may require a deposit in advance as hereinafter provided. There shall not be more than five groups with rates not exceeding those here stated.

*Group No. 1.*—Not over 4 per cent of the total annual payroll of the employers employing workmen entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act in such group.

*Group No. 2.*—Not over 3 per cent of the total annual payroll of the employers employing workmen entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act in such group.

*Group No. 3.*—Not over 2 per cent of the total annual payroll of the employers employing workmen entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act in such group.

*Group No. 4.*—Not over 1 per cent of the total annual payroll of the employers employing workmen entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act in such group.

*Group No. 5.*—Not over one-half of 1 per cent of the total annual payroll of the employers employing workmen entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act in such group.



The Workmen's Relief Commission may establish as many sub-groups as it may deem necessary and may fix different rates for any group or sub-groups of any group, provided such rates are within the limits previously prescribed herein for said group; *Provided*, That all public carriers operating railroads shall be included in this Act while carrying on their business or traffic in Porto Rico.

#### EXCEPTIONAL CASES.

In exceptional cases where the laborer's occupation is extraordinarily dangerous in the opinion of the commission, the commission may raise the rate of insurance to a maximum of 10 per cent.

If after this Act has gone into effect it is shown by experience that because of poor or careless management, or because of lack of safety appliances, any establishment or work is extraordinarily dangerous in comparison with other like establishments or occupations, the Workmen's Relief Commission may at any time advance its classification of risk and premium rate in proportion to the extraordinary hazard.

#### ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF PREMIUMS.

Section 11.—The Treasurer of Porto Rico is hereby empowered, authorized and directed to levy, assess and collect semiannually and in advance from every employer of workmen subject to this Act, such annual premiums as the Workmen's Relief Commission shall determine in accordance with the preceding section, on the total amount of wages paid by said employer to workmen who were or would have been entitled to the benefits of this Act during the year prior to the levying of the premiums, if the same had been in force.

Said premiums, and those determined in Section 12 of this Act, having been collected, shall be deposited by the Treasurer of Porto Rico in the trust fund for compensation to workmen hereby created. The assessment shall be made prior to August 30th in each fiscal year beginning on the preceding July 1, taking as a basis therefor the total amount paid for wages of workmen employed by each employer during the previous year who were or would have been entitled to the benefits of this Act if the same had been in force.

Should the employer fail to pay the semiannual premiums legally levied upon him, on or before September 15 and on or before February 15, the Treasurer of Porto Rico may order the attachment of property of said employer and shall proceed to collect such premium together with such charges thereon in accordance with the law and procedure which is at present or which may hereafter be in force for the collection of unpaid property taxes. Surcharges shall be collected for every month or fraction thereof during which said premium shall remain unpaid after September 15 and February 15, at the rate of one per cent a month.

Any employer who prior to the first of July or to the first of January of any year ceases to be subject to the provisions of this Act may excuse himself from payment of premiums for the following semester or semesters by giving such notification and producing such evidence that he will not be subject to this Act, as the Workmen's Relief Commission may require. Any employer subject to this Act during any part of a semester, shall pay the premiums for the whole semester, but he shall be entitled to such reimbursement, if any, as provided in

the following section; *Provided*, That in such cases reimbursement may be made at the expiration of the semester for which said premiums were paid.

Section 12.—At the end of each fiscal year the Treasurer shall compare the actual payroll of each employer paying premiums in accordance with this Act for such fiscal year, with the payroll of the preceding fiscal year on the basis of which premiums were levied, assessed and collected by him, and if the payroll for the year during which the insurance was effective is greater than that of the previous fiscal year for which premiums were levied, assessed and collected, the Treasurer shall levy, assess and collect upon the difference, additional premiums in the same manner and on the same basis as the original premiums were levied, assessed and collected; and if the payroll for the year during which insurance was effective is less than that of the previous fiscal year for which premiums were levied, assessed and collected, the Treasurer shall refund from the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund the proportion of the premiums corresponding to the difference between the actual payroll for the year during which insurance was effective and the year for which they were levied, assessed and collected; *Provided*, That in any case where the Workmen's Relief Commission believes that the payroll for the present fiscal year is not a fair basis upon which to estimate the payroll for the succeeding year, it may require in advance a deposit to cover the premiums during the year for which insurance is to be effective, and the balance of the said deposit, if any, shall be refunded at the end of the year after deducting the premium due on the basis of the actual payroll for the year during which such insurance was effective, and if the deposit is found at any time to be insufficient, the Workmen's Relief Commission is authorized to require a further deposit to meet such deficiency. The deposit required by the Workmen's Relief Commission shall be levied, assessed and collected in the same manner hereinbefore provided for the levy, assessment and collection of premiums.

#### DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS.

Section 13.—It shall be the duty of every employer of workmen, entitled to the benefits of this Act, to file with the Workmen's Relief Commission, on or before the fifteenth day of July in each year, a duplicate statement under oath showing the number of workmen employed by the said employer and who were or would have been entitled to the benefits of this Act if the same had been in force, and also the total amount of wages paid to said workmen during the previous fiscal year, and such other information in regard to the wages of the said workmen as may be required to be furnished by the commission.

The failure to file such statement on or before the date above specified shall constitute a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not less than fifty (50) nor more than five hundred (500) dollars, in the discretion of the court. Blanks for such statements shall be furnished upon request by the Workmen's Relief Commission.

It shall be the duty of every employer of laborers entitled to the benefits of this Act to keep a complete register, in accordance with such regulations as may be prescribed by the Workmen's Relief Commission, showing the name of every such laborer, the age and sex of such laborer, the nature of the work performed by and the wages paid to every one of the said laborers.

The Workmen's Relief Commission may order an inspection to be made of

all the payrolls and other books or records of such employers relating to the payment of wages, by any representative duly authorized by it; and it shall be the duty of such employer to permit such an inspection.

Any employer who knowingly falsifies the information required by this section shall be subject to the same penalty herein provided for a failure to file the statement required by this section and shall also be liable to the Workmen's Relief Commission for three times the difference between the premium paid and the amount that should have been paid, which sum shall be collected in the same manner as provided for the collection of the regular premiums under this Act.

#### EMPLOYEES NOT TO PAY FOR INSURANCE.

Section 14.—No agreement by an employee to pay any portion of the premium paid by his employer to the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund shall be valid; and any employer who makes a reduction for such purpose from the wages or salaries of any employee entitled to the benefits of this Act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

#### EXPENSES OF ADMINISTRATION.

Section 15.—If in the opinion of the Workmen's Relief Commission additional employees are absolutely necessary for the work of the Department of Agriculture and Labor, the Treasury Department, the Department of Health or of the Commission, in connection with this Act, such additional employees may be employed and their compensation fixed by the Workmen's Relief Commission with the approval of the Governor. The expenses of the commission as well as any traveling expenses incurred in connection with the carrying out of this Act, shall be charged to the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund.

#### INVESTMENT OF SURPLUS OR RESERVE.

Section 16.—The Workmen's Relief Commission may invest any of the surplus or reserve funds belonging to the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund in bonds of the United States or of Porto Rico or bonds for which the credit of The People of Porto Rico has been pledged. All such securities or evidences of indebtedness shall be placed in the hands of the Treasurer of Porto Rico, who shall be the custodian thereof. He shall collect the principal or interest thereof when due and pay the same into the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund. The Treasurer shall pay all warrants or vouchers drawn on the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund for the making of such investments when signed by the president and secretary of the Workmen's Relief Commission, approved by the Auditor of Porto Rico and countersigned by the Governor. The Workmen's Relief Commission, with the consent of the Governor of Porto Rico, may sell any such securities, the proceeds thereof to be paid over to the Treasurer, who shall pay the same into the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund.

#### ACCOUNTS.

Section 17.—The Workmen's Relief Commission shall report all matters relating to the receipts, disbursements, accounts and financial matters to the Treasurer of Porto Rico who shall keep an accurate account of the money paid in premiums by each of the several groups of employments, and the expenses of administering the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund and the disbursements on account



of injuries and deaths of employees in each of said groups, including the creation of reserves to meet anticipated and unexpected losses and to carry the claims to maturity; and also an account of the amounts received from each individual employer; and of the amount disbursed from the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund for expenses, and a statement of injuries and deaths of the employees of such employer, including the reserves so created, and all other necessary accounts of the Workmen's Relief Commission; *Provided*, That all such accounts shall be subject to examination and inspection by the Auditor of Porto Rico.

#### DISCLOSURES PROHIBITED.

Section 18.—Any information acquired in accordance with section 13 of this Act by the Workmen's Relief Commission or by any officer or employee intrusted with the performance of any duty under this Act shall be deemed to be confidential information, and any officer or employee who shall disclose the said information shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

#### ASSIGNMENT OF INSURANCE.

Section 19.—If any employer, whether an individual, firm, partnership, association or corporation, insured under the provisions of this Act, transfers his business during the period for which said employer is insured, to any other employer, whether an individual, firm, partnership, association or corporation, the Workmen's Relief Commission may, on written notice and with the consent of both parties, (the employer originally insured and the employer to whom the business is transferred) assign to his successors all the rights, credits and obligations of the employer originally insured, and in such cases shall substitute the name of the assignee for the name of the employer originally insured in all accounts, records and other matters pertaining to the former, for the balance of the period for which the first employer was insured, notwithstanding the provisions of section 23 of this Act.

#### DEFENSES ABOLISHED.

Section 20.—If any accident occurs to any workman employed by an employer subject to the provisions of this Act, who has failed to comply with said provisions relative to the submission of reports and the payment of premiums, the Workmen's Relief Commission is hereby authorized to charge said employer with the amount of such compensation as the commission may authorize to be paid to the injured workmen and the Treasurer of Porto Rico shall levy and collect said amount in the same manner prescribed for the collection of premiums. When a laborer or his heirs, in accordance with this Act, and in the case specified in section 20,<sup>1</sup> and the Workmen's Relief Commission in the cases specified in Section 21,<sup>2</sup> institute an action to recover damages from any employer, it shall not be a defense in favor of the employer—

- (a) That the employee was guilty of contributory negligence;
- (b) That the injury was caused by the negligence of a fellow-employee;
- (c) That the employee had assumed the risk of injury;

<sup>1</sup> Spanish text reads: "21."

<sup>2</sup> Spanish text reads: "22."

(d) That the injury was caused by the negligence of a sub-contractor or of an independent contractor, unless the contractor or independent sub-contractor shall have been insured in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

No contract between employer and employee purporting to permit any of said defenses shall be valid.

#### INJURIES BY WILFUL ACT OR GROSS NEGLIGENCE OF EMPLOYER.

Section 21.—Nothing in this Act contained shall be interpreted as depriving the injured workman, or his heirs, in accordance with this Act, in case of death, of waiving the provisions of this Act at any time prior to receiving compensation under this Act and to claim and recover damages from his employer, in accordance with the provisions of the law before this Act takes effect, when the injuries sustained by the said workman were caused by the illegal act or gross negligence of his employer; *Provided*, That only in case of waiver shall the workman comprised in this Act, or their heirs in accordance with the same, have the right to institute an action for damages against the employer.

#### LIABILITY OF THIRD PERSONS.

Section 22.—When the injury for which workmen are entitled to compensation under this Act shall have been sustained under circumstances creating a liability against some other person or against the employer where the injury was caused by his illegal act or gross negligence or by defects in the machinery or implements and when the workman or his heirs receive compensation under this Act, the Workmen's Relief Commission shall be subrogated to the rights of the injured workman or his heirs and may prosecute an action and recover damages from such third person or such employer liable for such injury, which damages when recovered shall be covered into the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund for the benefit of the particular group in which the injured workman's occupation was classified.

#### ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS.

Section 23.—Rights and actions accruing under this Act shall not be assignable to other persons nor shall they be subject to attachment or to the claims of other persons.

#### FINES COLLECTED.

Section 24.—All fines collected for violation of any of the provisions of this Act shall be deposited in the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund.

#### CONTRACTS BETWEEN LABORERS AND ATTORNEYS.

Section 25.—Any contract, agreement or stipulation between the injured workman or his heirs in accordance with this Act, and an attorney, for the payment to the said attorney of a fee contingent upon the result of the trial, shall be void and have no legal force or effect unless it be in writing and approved by the judge of the court where the suit is instituted.

Any stipulation, contract or agreement for the payment to the attorney prosecuting the claim for damages against the employer, of an amount in excess of twenty-five (25) per centum of the amount recovered at the trial, shall be ille-

gal and void, and the making of such contract or stipulation, or the actual receipt by the said attorney of an amount in excess of twenty-five (25) per centum of the amount recovered at the trial shall be illegal and void, and shall constitute misconduct on the part of the said attorney, punishable by suspension or disbarment after proper proceedings have been instituted against the offender in accordance with the existing laws.

#### LIABILITY OF CONTRACTORS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS.

Section 26.—In reporting their annual payrolls all employers shall include all workmen who are working either on piece work or under any independent contractor or sub-contractor employed or contracted by such employer, and all premiums shall be based upon the current payroll of the employer so computed; *Provided*, That this section shall not apply to employers for whom work is done by an independent contractor, and if the latter is insured in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

#### CREATION OF A TRUST FUND.

Section 27.—That the amounts existing in the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund created by Section 1 of an act entitled "An Act providing for the relief of such workmen as may be injured, of the dependent families of those who may lose their lives while engaged in trades or occupations, and for other purposes," approved April 13, 1916, are hereby reappropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act and shall constitute the Workmen's Relief Trust Fund hereby created together with such other sums as are hereinafter specified. The aforesaid sum advanced as hereinbefore stated, shall be reimbursed to the Treasury of Porto Rico, wholly or in part, provided that in the judgment of the Commission the "Workmen's Relief Trust Fund" is sufficient to cover safely such payments as shall be made in accordance herewith within the year following the date of such reimbursement after having deducted the amount of the same.

Section 28.—That all employers accepting the benefits of this Act and employing laborers under the conditions specified in this Act shall contribute to the "Workmen's Relief Trust Fund" in the form and manner provided herein.

Section 29.—If at the end of any fiscal year said trust fund shall have a considerable surplus after having paid all its obligations and liabilities, and after the commission has set aside such amount as it may deem advisable as a reserve fund, the Workmen's Relief Commission shall reduce the rates of contribution for part or all of the groups into which risks are divided.

#### DEFINITIONS.

Section 30.—The words "laborer" or "employee," wherever used in this Act, shall be construed to include any person employed by any employer, who is entitled to the benefits of this Act, whether such person is man, woman or child.

Section 31.—That no member of the Workmen's Relief Commission nor any officer, employee, or agent thereof, nor any person in the service of the same, shall represent another person, nor shall he have any interest in any transaction, claim or matter in the jurisdiction of the said commission. Violations of this section shall be punished by removal and permanent disability to serve on said



commission or under its jurisdiction, it being understood that this prohibition shall not include acts that are purely official realized by virtue of office or employment.

Section 32.—That all laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 33.—That this Act shall be applicable to accidents occurring subsequent to June 30, 1918.

Section 34.—That this Act shall take effect ninety days after its approval.

*Approved, February 25, 1918.*







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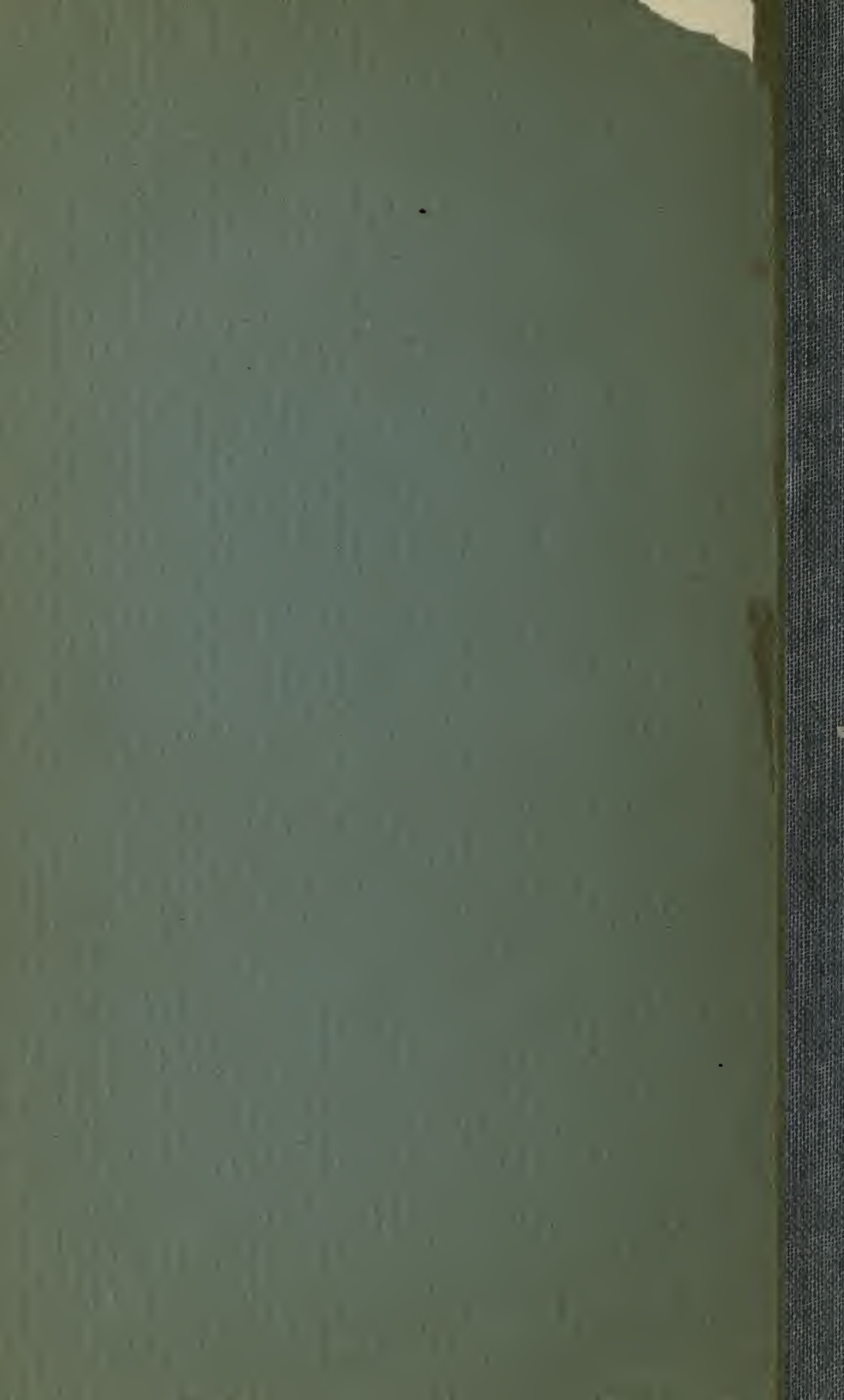
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